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HISTORY OF THE BRAHMO SAMAJ

HISTORY OF THE BRAHMO SAMAJ

BY
SIVANATH SASTRI, M.A.

Vol. I

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PREFACE

I commenced writing this book during my residence in England in the year 1888, at the urgent request of the late Miss S. D. Collet, the well-known historian of the Brahmo Samaj. Under some peculiar circumstances, which need not be related here, she insisted upon my taking up this work and placed all her records at my disposal. After having gone through the first portion of the work I had to leave that country. Upon my return home I laid it aside, owing to my numerous engagements in other ways, only resuming it from time to time, till there came a consideration which influenced me almost to give it up altogether. I was deterred by the thought that having been one of those who had a leading hand in the organisation of a schismatic Brahmo movement, I was not the proper person to write a history of the Brahmo Samaj, and that it should be left to outside observers. I remained in this state of hesitancy for years, when there came another impulse from another direction. The dying request of my esteemed friend, Mr. A. M. Bose, conveyed in the words—"please do not fail to record

our version of the story,"—finally impelled me to resume the narrative. After his departure from this world, I devoted much time to self-examination and prayer before finally making up my mind to resume it with the thought that,—‘fact is fact, and history is history, let me record the facts and leave the readers to form their judgments.’ I have tried my best to do so, as the reader will observe. In all cases of conflict of opinion I have tried, as far as possible, to state facts in the language of the parties concerned. I have laid bare, to the best of my knowledge, the state of things as they existed during different periods; and shall indeed be glad if my readers find the book really useful towards giving them a succinct and correct account of the progress and development of the Theistic Church of Modern India.

In compiling this history I have used every available source of information; such, for instance, as Mr. G. S. Leonard’s “History of the Brahmo Samaj”, Rev. Bhai T. N. Sanyal’s History of the Brahmo Samaj in Bengali, Miss S. D. Collet’s Brahmo Year Books, her short “History of the Brahmo Samaj,” and her life of Rajah Rammohun Roy, Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar’s “Life of Keshub Chunder Sen,” Rev. Bhai Gour Govinda Upadhyaya’s Bengali life of Minister Keshub Chunder Sen, Banka Behari Kar’s “Life of

Bijay Krishna Goswami," Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore's Autobiography and Mr. Sen's lectures and sermons ; for the rest I have depended upon other sources of information and also upon my own memory.

My thanks are specially due to Babus Ramananda Chatterjee, Editor of the *Modern Review*, and Prithwis Chandra Ray, Editor of the *Indian World*, for the valuable aid they have rendered in seeing the book through the press. But for the help kindly given by them, the present volume would have been marked by many more defects than what are to be found in it.

My thanks are also due to the Rajah Saheb of Pithapuram for having generously come forward to bear the printing expenses of this volume ; otherwise its publication might have been still further delayed.

The state of my health permitting, I hope to be able to conclude this history in two more volumes during the course of the next two years.

CALCUTTA,
March, 1911.

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SIVANATH SASTRI •

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THE HISTORY OF THE BRAHMO SAMAJ

CHAPTER I

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY

The phrase "Brâhmo Samaj" literally means the society of the worshippers of the One True God. "Brahmo" means one who worships Brahma, or the Supreme Spirit of the universe, and "Samaj" means a community of men. The Brahmo Samaj, therefore, represents a body of men who are struggling, in India, to establish the worship of the Supreme Being in spirit as opposed to the prevailing idolatry of the land. The movement was started on the 20th of August, 1828, by Raja Ram Mohun Roy and his friends by opening a place for public worship on the Chitpore Road in Calcutta, and was duly and publicly inaugurated in January, 1830, by the consecration of the first house of prayer, now known as the Adi Brahmo Samaj.

It was the first of its kind in the history of the country. Amongst the myriads of temples scattered over the land, which bore testimony to the great piety of the Hindu race, there was none that was dedicated to such a purpose. To

tal principles of their faith they were carrying on their sectarian fight on mere matters of external forms and had sunk like the Tantrics into the grossest sensuality.

The corruption and degeneracy of the priesthood was great. The majority of them were as ignorant as the mass of the people about the higher teachings of their sacred books, and contented themselves with learning by rote and repeating parrot-like a number of rules and formularies, all written in the Sanskrit language, which was no longer the spoken language of the people and which many of them did not know. With the decay of Hindu society under Mahomedan rule, the Brahmins had fallen into great poverty, and were then dependent on the lower castes, who had become corrupt in their manners by coming into contact with certain classes of Mahomedans and were accordingly unable to exert a wholesome public opinion. The old learning of the country had perished ; its professors had grown scarce ; and in their place a class of men, chiefly educated through the Arabic and Persian languages, had come into existence, many of whom were secret disbelievers in the ordinary forms of orthodox Hinduism, but outwardly conformed to its practices, and secretly indulged in many vices previously unknown to Hindus but practised by the aforesaid classes of the Mahomedan people. There

CHAPTER I

were seminaries of Sanskrit learning at Nadia and other places, but the knowledge of Vedic literature was unknown to them, and they confined themselves chiefly to teaching a few elementary branches of grammar, rhetoric, belles-lettres, law and logic.

The blessings of a good English education, which have produced such marvellous results in subsequent times, were unknown. (The necessities of the new struggle for existence pressing upon men had taught them that a partial knowledge of the English language was essential for their worldly prospects. Accordingly, there was at that time, an ever-increasing demand for English education; but it formed no part of the policy of the Indian Government to impart to the people such education. The lakh of rupees set apart by the Directors of the East India Company in 1813 for the encouragement of learning was being exclusively used, for many years, for the re-printing of old Sanskrit and Arabic books. Lord William Bentinck, one of the most benevolent governors-general India has ever known, had just taken in hand the reins of government. Lord Macaulay whose famous minute on English education finally decided a long-standing controversy that had raged for upwards of twenty years, had not yet arrived. Lord William Bentinck's celebrated Education Decree of the 7th March, 1835, was still in the

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womb of the future. In the absence of government support a large number of English-teaching schools, very defective in their management and mode of training, had sprung up in different parts of Calcutta and its neighbourhood to meet the popular demand. All that most of them aimed at was to teach a number of English words and phrases without any regard for grammar or syntax. The only effort in the direction of a good English education consisted in the opening of the Hindu College in 1817. But the first effects of imparting high English education to the youth of Bengal were far from being encouraging. Many of those who were the first fruits of that education openly professed atheism at that time and, to the great dismay of their Hindu relations, were imbibing many of the vices of modern civilization. In fact at the time of the opening of Ram Mohun Roy's church, the Hindu College ~~was~~ a seething cauldron of a new revolutionary spirit. There was in its staff of teachers a remarkable young man, named H. V. Derozio, a Eurasian by birth, who, though a youth of nineteen or twenty himself, was influencing the thoughts and aspirations of the students of the College in a manner the like of which has seldom been witnessed in the case of any other teacher. He was their guide, philosopher, and friend. Together with the senior

CHAPTER

students he had established in the year 1829 a society called the Academic Association, where the utmost freedom of discussion was allowed on all subjects, sacred or profane; as a consequence, a new and fervent spirit which aimed at revolutionising society had been evolved. Once roused it went beyond all bounds of moderation intended by its progenitor. Mr. Derozio had received his education under one Mr. David Drummond, a Scotch adventurer, who had drunk deep the spirit of the French Revolution, and had left his country and his kith and kin on account of theological differences. The teachings of Mr. Drummond had made a deep and lasting impression on the mind of his gifted pupil, who carried the same fire into the Hindu College. The influence of his teachings on his pupil-friends was highly moral in its character. He taught them above all to be honest in their speech and conduct, laying great stress on the value of independence and moral courage; but the contagion of free-thinking extended over a far larger area than the sphere of personal influence of the teacher; and many who had never seen or heard him professed his views. With this thoughtless portion of young Bengal, independence meant open defiance of the authority of their elders and moral courage meant contemptuous reviling of the ancient faith, together with

the undisguised profession of infidelity. "The junior students," writes the biographer of David Hare, "caught from the senior students the infection of ridiculing the Hindu religion and where they were required to utter mantras or prayers, they repeated lines from the Iliad." The committee of the college, where the Hindu element preponderated, passed repeated resolutions during the years 1829-1830 to warn the students as well as the teachers, but to no purpose ; till at last towards the beginning of 1831, the whole orthodox Hindu community of Calcutta were so much alarmed, that they rose as one man and under the leadership of Babu Rām Kamal Sen, the grandfather of Keshub Chunder Sen, brought such pressure to bear on the committee of the college that they were obliged to secure the resignation of Mr. Derozio.

(Whilst the efforts for imparting higher education to the higher classes were attended by such unpleasant results, the state of popular education was at its lowest ebb. The majority of the male population of the province, together with its whole womanhood, were living in the darkness of ignorance. The little education that was imparted to those who carried on the ordinary business of the nation was of the most rudimentary kind. It was accounted no shame even by a Brahmin to be unlettered. There was no literature of the people,

so to say, and its absence was supplied by a number of poetical works, composed during the previous two or three centuries, many of which, however, were highly demoralising in their teachings.) The inner life of society was still more deplorable. With the decay of national life, frightful social evils, that pressed hard on the life of almost all classes, had sprung up; the rules of caste, though partly slackened by the influence of Mahomedan education and also by the altered circumstances of social life, consequent upon the establishment of British rule, were still very stringent. Almost all the agencies that in subsequent times have so largely contributed to partially break down the barriers of ages,—such agencies, for instance, as a common western education, which has opened up a new channel of communication, the uniformity of circumstances of political life that is drawing closer the bonds of sympathy between different parts of the country, cheap postage, which carries with wonderful rapidity and regularity the thoughts of one province to another, a net-work of railways, that takes no account of caste, but rather helps in breaking it down by promoting the intercourse of the races,—were not then in existence. Men were exclusive, unsympathetic and jealous of their class privileges, so much so that it was seriously argued by the orthodox

adversaries of Ram Mohun Roy that it was an unpardonable breach of social decorum on the part of the most virtuous of Sudras to sit on the same bench or carpet with a Brahmin. The conventional usages of society paid an external homage, almost bordering on worship, to the representatives of the priestly class who were ignorant and unspiritual to a degree. There was living in Calcutta in those days a Sudra spice-seller who had collected the dust from the feet of a hundred thousand Brahmins to wear it as a remedy for an attack of leprosy, and he was a type of his people. The rules of caste made it sinful for the different castes to inter-marry or dine with one another. The weight of social opinion pressed heavily on the lower classes, who aspired to nothing higher or nobler than common menial service or brutalising labour unredeemed by a single ray of intellectual light. The poverty and degradation of the masses were frightful. Centuries of ignorance and political slavery had reduced them to the condition of children, and, like children, they revelled in childish things. Even in religion, they believed in and practised puerile things that were unworthy of rational beings.

But no class were greater sufferers from the social evils of the time than the women of Bengal. A few centuries ago a certain Hindu ruler of

Eastern Bengal, which was the principal seat of Brahminism at that time, had divided all the Brahmins of the province into certain orders of social prestige, according to their merits and attainments, calling the highest of them Kulin. The system of Kulinism gave rise in course of time to extensive polygamy. In as much as the privileges of these orders were made hereditary and as an alliance with a Kulin was looked upon as a means of obtaining social honour for a family, such an alliance was naturally sought after by the fathers of all marriageable girls. Thus the custom came to be generally adopted of a Kulin man marrying a number of wives. Under this horrid custom there were in Bengal, at the time under review, thousands of young women who were living a life of practical widowhood, nominally wedded to husbands who owned in many cases scores of other wives. But far more miserable was the lot of the Hindu widows of the higher castes, many of whom were burnt alive, sometimes by their own choice, but oftener by compulsion, on the funeral pyres of their husbands. And those of them who shrank back from self-immolation were doomed to perpetual widowhood and were subjected to such austerities as made their lives a burden to them. Indeed, the death of a husband brought a sudden change in the life of

a woman, in everything that makes life agreeable. From that day she entered for life into a region of darkness and despair, from which the escape was only through natural death. This darkness was partly enlightened in the case of those who were left by their husbands in easy circumstances, and had loving relations to take care of them ; but alas ! how vast was the number of those others who, left without means of support and neglected by relatives, were dependent on the charities of others, and led a life of domestic drudgery in return for the subsistence they received. It is no wonder that many of them preferred self-immolation with their husbands to a life of misery like this.

The habits and tastes, the pleasures and diversions of the people were in keeping with the general degeneracy of manners. Those that were well-to-do wasted their time and substance in flying kites, in witnessing fights between rams and between bulbuls (a kind of bird well-known in India), in getting up dances of professional *nautch* girls and operas called *jatras*, which often included scenes highly immoral in their tendencies. Many again squandered away their fortunes in still more frivolous pursuits. Iswar Chandra, the Raja of Nadia, had spent in 1790 Rs. 100,000 in the marriage of two monkeys, and those days were

not entirely over in 1830. Instances were not rare, at that time, of rich men spending quite as much on their foolish vanities. Whilst the rich wasted their substance in such vanities, the poor regaled themselves with *Kabis* and *Panchalies*, in which two rival parties of singers struggled to sing down each other with impromptu retaliatory songs, often couched in the most vulgar and indecent language.

It was in the midst of a state of things like this that Raja Ram Mohun Roy consecrated on the 23rd of January, 1830, in the presence of five hundred of his countrymen and one English gentleman, Mr. Montgomery Martin, the first house of prayer for the pure spiritual worship of the One True God, with the following manifesto, which forms a part of the trust-deed of the new church :—

“The said message or building, land, tenements, hereditaments and premises with their appurtenances to be used, occupied, enjoyed, applied and appropriated as and for a place of public meeting of all sorts and descriptions of people without distinction, as shall behave and conduct themselves in an orderly, sober, religious and devout manner, for the worship and adoration of the One Eternal Unsearchable and Immutable Being, who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe, but not under or by any other name, designation or title peculiarly used for and applied to any particular being or beings by any man or set of men whatsoever, and that no graven image, statue, or sculpture, carving, painting, picture, portrait or the likeness of anything shall be admitted within the said message, building, land, tenements and hereditaments and premises; and that no sacrifice, offering or oblation of any kind or thing, shall ever be permitted therein; and that no animal or

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living creature shall, within or on the said messuage, premises, be deprived of life either for religious purposes or for food, and that no eating or drinking (except such as shall be necessary by any accident for the preservation of life) feasting or rioting be permitted therein or thereon, and that in conducting the said worship and adoration, no objects, animate or inanimate, that has been or is, or shall hereafter become or be recognized as an object of worship by any man or set of men, shall be reviled or slightly and contemptuously spoken of, or alluded to, either in preaching, praying or in the hymns or other modes of worship, that may be delivered or used in the said messuage or building; and that no sermon, preaching, discourse, prayer or hymn delivered, made or used in such worship but such as have a tendency to the promotion of charity, morality, piety, benevolence, virtue and the strengthening of the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds."

However, the work of this great revolution was not effected in a day. The opening of this house of prayer was in fact the crowning act of an agitation carried on through a long series of years, under every circumstance of social persecution, by Ram Mohun Roy, who headed the movement at the time. The history of the origin of the movement is bound up with the history of his individual life. But it is not possible, nor is it necessary, within my present limits, to narrate all the facts and incidents of that eventful life. For a detailed notice of that life I must refer the reader to published biographical records, confining myself, for the purposes of this review, to a brief sketch of his career, with such notices of particular inci-

dents as are likely to throw some light on the origin of the movement.

Raja Ram Mohun Roy was born on the 22nd of May, 1772, at the village of Radhanagar, in the district of Burdwan, in the province of Bengal. His immediate ancestors, though they had deserted the hereditary profession of Brahmins of their class and successively held positions of trust and responsibility under the Mahomedan government of Murshidabad, were all renowned for their great piety and orthodoxy. His father Ram Kanta Roy was specially noted for his quiet and retiring disposition, and his great devotion to the religion of his ancestors. The mother of Ram Mohun was as remarkable for her piety as her husband. So great was her orthodoxy, that she sent herself to be used as a tool by her relations for persecuting her illustrious son, a step for which the good lady seems to have repented in after life. It is also stated that it was chiefly through her hostility that Ram Mohun had to forsake his paternal dwelling-house at Radhanagar and remove his family to Raghunathpur where he built a house of his own. The closing year of his mother's life was passed in the performance of a characteristic vow. Though brought up in affluence and ease, she attached herself during that year to the temple of Jugunnath in Orissa as a menial servant.

HISTORY OF THE BRAHMO SAMAJ

Previous to the birth of Ram Mohun, his father had retired from the service of the Mahomedan court and was living in quiet retirement in his native village of Radhanagar. Besides Tarini or Phulthakurani, the mother of Ram Mohun, Ram Kanta Roy had another wife, by whom he had a son called Ramlochan, of whom little is known, and Phulthakurani had two sons, Jagamohun and Ram Mohun and a daughter. From infancy Ram Mohun was marked out as a specially talented lad and his father bestowed special care on his education. According to the prevalent custom of the times, he got the boy Ram Mohun married very early in life. And the first wife dying soon, Ram Mohun Roy was married to two other little girls ; and all this before his education had properly commenced. He received the first rudiments of instruction in a *pathshala*, or village school, with additional tuition in Persian under a Moulvi under due supervision of his father.

After a few years of preparatory tuition at home, the parents of Ram Mohun sent him to the city of Patna, at that time a famous seat of Mahomedan learning, to learn the Persian and Arabic languages, the passports to fame and position at that time. Here, whilst studying the Koran in the original Arabic, his eyes seem to have been, for the first time, opened to the errors of Hindu idolatry. He is said to have been

pecially enchanted with the writings of the *Sufi* school of Mahomedan philosophers, whose views tallied to a large extent with those of the Vedantic school of the Hindus and who accordingly were regarded as little better than heretics by the narrow and orthodox school of Mahomedans. Throughout his subsequent life, Ram Mohun Roy never entirely shook off these early Mahomedan influences. In private life, through a long course of years, his habits and tastes were those of a Mahomedan, and in private conversation he always delighted to quote freely from his favourite Sufi authors.

At the early age of sixteen or seventeen, so the story runs, shortly after his return from Patna, he was observed day after day to be deeply engaged in writing something which his father secretly read and found to be a treatise against the superstitions and idolatry of their ancestral faith. This occasioned a hot discussion between father and son, and the latter was peremptorily ordered by the former to leave his house; whereupon the daring youth conceived the astounding plan of leaving home and undertaking a journey of several thousand miles on foot and also of crossing the Himalayas to visit Tibet for the study of Buddhism. Such travels on the part of young enthusiasts were not altogether unknown in

those days. Companies of Hindu mendicants were then constantly moving about all over the country, visiting places of pilgrimage, or other important gathering places, collecting new disciples and leading them away from their homes. Many of these disciples were quite young, not older than Ram Mohun. It is quite likely that he fell into the company of some such travelling band, and undertook his famous journey to Tibet.

Whether the above-mentioned treatise is the same as *Manasaratul Adyan* referred to in his Persian work called *Tuhfat-ul-Muwabhidin* or not, it cannot now be ascertained. Miss S. D. Collet, the Raja's biographer, throws doubt on the authenticity of the above account of the young Ram Mohun's departure from home. But the fact of the Raja's living apart from his parental house after his return, lends some authority to the current account.

During his residence at Tibet he is said to have incurred the displeasure of the Lama-worshippers by his protest against their idolatry, and had to escape with difficulty from imminent death, through the help of some Tibetan ladies, an act of kindness for which he was ever grateful to the female sex.

After his return from his travels, which seem to have occupied three or four years, he settled

down in Benares for a number of years, devoting his time, it is supposed, to the study of the Sanskrit language and of the sacred literature of the Hindus.

It seems that during this period of his residence at Benares some sort of reconciliation took place between him and his father, and he was allowed to have his family by his side or to visit them occasionally ; for, his eldest son Radha-prasad was born in the year 1800 during his residence at Benares. It was also during this period that he began to acquire the knowledge of the English language by self-study and extraordinary diligence.

Soon after the death of his father, which occurred in 1803, Ram Mohun Roy seems to have moved down to Murshidabad, whence he published a Persian treatise with an Arabic preface, entitled *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhiddin*, or 'A Gift to Monotheists'; a work protesting against the idolatries and superstitions of all creeds and trying to lay a common foundation of universal religion in the doctrine of the unity of the God-head. We also find the mention of another work in Persian called *Manazaratul Adyan*, i.e. Discussions on various Religions, published about this time. In it Ram Mohun Roy is said to have used some sarcastic expressions against Mahomet, which gave great offence to

orthodox Mussulmans. But Mr. W. Adam, the Raja's friend, assures us that he was always respectful to the Prophet and had actually commenced to write his biography, which, however, he could not finish. It seems that at this time he secured an appointment under the East India Company in the Revenue Department and after serving in several capacities at Ramgarh, Bhagalpur and other places under Mr. Digby, the revenue officer, finally accompanied that officer to Rangpur in 1809 as the sheristadar, or native assistant to the Collector of Revenue.

The duties of a native assistant of a Collector of Revenue in those unsettled times were very heavy. The state of things in the northernmost districts of Rangpur, Dinajpur and Purnea, included in the jurisdiction of Mr. Digby, the Collector, was specially complicated. Here, there were many powerful landlords, who had a large number of unsettled disputes, and almost every individual case of settlement involved the examination of a variety of records and documents and the consideration of conflicting claims. In many cases there were no documents whatsoever to substantiate the claims of actual owners of land, and they required personal attendance and local enquiry by the settlement officer. In all settlement work, in those days, the trusted sheristadars

were, as a rule, the chief agents employed by the English Collectors, who were guided to a large extent by their decisions and counsels.

Ram Mohun Roy had all this fatiguing work to go through every day ; but so great was his eagerness for the investigation of religious truth, that he devoted the few hours of his hard-earned leisure, in the evenings, to holding discussion-meetings with representative men of various sects, such as Hindus, Mahomedans and Jains. Indeed, the period of his residence at Rangpur was a fruitful one. On the one hand, during his residence there, he improved his own mind by acquiring varied knowledge, and, on the other, by his religious discussions, he tried to disseminate his principles among all classes of people. In addition to a knowledge of the old Vedantic literature of the country, he is said to have made a careful study of modern Tantric works with the aid of men like Hariharananda Tirthaswami, a Bengali Tantric mendicant whose acquaintance he made there, and also to have mastered the contents of the *Kālpa Sutra* and other works of the Jaina religion. Something like an informal club used to meet every evening at his residence after office work, which attracted all classes of people and gave rise to earnest discussions on various religious topics. These discussion-meetings raised up an

agitation among the people of Rangpur, and a hostile party was created under the leadership of Gourikanta Bhattacharya, a learned Brahmin, versed in Persian and Sanskrit, who was also sheristadar of another local Court and who also got up counter-meetings and upheld orthodox Hinduism. A treatise called *Jnan Chandrika* was composed at this time by Gourikanta, controverting Ram Mohun Roy's aims and views, which was subsequently published in Calcutta after the death of the latter.

In the midst of his arduous duties and his frequent discussion-meetings, Ram Mohun Roy found time to improve his knowledge of English by private study commenced in his twenty-second year. It is also stated by Mr. Digby that, with the progress of his knowledge of the English language, Ram Mohun Roy began to take, while at Rangpur, a keen interest in European politics, specially in the course of the French Revolution. At first he became a great admirer of Napoleon, and followed his career of conquest with great enthusiasm, which however suffered partial decline after his abdication. But his sympathy with the cause of freedom ever remained warm, and week by week he devoured the contents of Mr. Digby's Mail papers and whenever he found the cause of freedom losing, big drops of tear were seen trickling

down his cheeks. Thus it will be seen that though employed in some of the most engrossing secular duties during these years, [Ram Mohun Roy never lost sight of the grand mission of his life, the religious reformation of his country, and was in fact preparing himself all the time for his great life-work.]

After the death of Ram Mohun's father, the paternal estates came down to Jagamohun Roy, the elder brother of Ram Mohun Roy, who managed them till the year 1811, when he himself died, apparently leaving Ram Mohun Roy as the principal heir. But he could not get an easy access to his paternal inheritance. His own revered mother, under the instigation of his disaffected relations, stood in his way, and instituted law-suits both in the King's and the Company's Courts to contest his claims, which were ultimately decided in his favour after legal proceedings of many years. In the year 1814 Mr. Digby left for England on leave and the same year Ram Mohun Roy retired from Government Service, mainly to commence his life-work, but also partly because his presence was needed in Calcutta to watch the course of the law-suits pending. He settled down in Calcutta in 1814. The next year saw the publication of his translation of the Vedanta, and the foundation of the *Atmiya Sabha*, an asso-

ciation for the dissemination of religious truth and the promotion of free discussions of theological subjects.

But who were those that constituted the *Atmiya Sabha*? By the time Ram Mohun Roy settled down in Calcutta his reformatory doctrines were pretty well known to the educated portion of his countrymen in the metropolis. Many reports of the meetings held at Rangpur and of his sayings and doings there must have reached them, and he was already an interesting personality to many. As fame travelled from north to south, he found many sympathisers among that class of his countrymen who were acquainted with Persian and who also secretly felt in their hearts that the idolatry of the orthodox Hindus was an error. This sympathy with his principles, though confined to a limited circle, was nowhere so strong as in Calcutta, for here, in addition to a common Persian education, men's minds were considerably unhinged by the new contact with European civilization. Consequently, when Ram Mohun Roy arrived on the scene of his future labours, a coterie of sympathetic souls naturally gathered round him. Several of them belonged to some of the richest and most influential families of Bengal. Amongst the rich and influential men who gathered around him at that time may be

mentioned Babu Dwaraka Nath Tagore of Jorasanko, Babu Prosanna Kumar Tagore of Patharia-ghata, Babus Kali Nath and Baikunta Nath Munshi of Taki, Babu Brindaban Mitra, grandfather of Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra, Babu Kasi Nath Mullick of Calcutta, Raja Kali Sankar Ghosal of Bhukailash, Babu Annada Prosad Bannerji of Telinipara, and Babu Baidya Nath Mukerji, the grandfather of Justice Anukul Mukerji. Besides these, there were many others, such as Brojo Mohun Mozumdar, Haladhar Bose, Nanda Kishore Bose, the father of Raj Narain Bose (subsequently, President of the Adi Brahma Samaj), who sought the Raja's company and frequented the meetings of the *Atmiya Sabha*.

All of these men, however, had not the same motives in approaching Ram Mohun Roy. Some sought his company from a sense of the great honour done to themselves by association with one so distinguished; others frequented his house for the wise counsel and ready help that he always rendered in all their temporal embarrassments; whilst a few were actuated by a genuine sympathy with his principles. With these last (he chiefly established the *Atmiya Sabha*. The majority of them were middle-aged men, men experienced in the ways of the world, whom he regarded as his friends and equals in life and delighted to call

"brothers." But there were also others, not very many, who were younger in age and who approached him as disciples approach their master, amongst whom were the last mentioned.

Amongst the learned associates of Ram Mohun Roy at this time, who materially helped him in quoting and expounding ancient scriptures, were two well-known Sanskrit scholars. The first was Pandit Sivaprasad Misra, who signed some of the Raja's controversial books, and the second, Hariharananda Tirthaswami, already mentioned in connection with Ram Mohun's work at Rangpur. This mendicant-friend of Ram Mohun Roy deserves special notice. His original name was Nandakumar. He was born at Malpara, in the Hugli district, where he had received a good Sanskrit education; but he early adopted the habit of a mendicant and withdrew from the world, devoting most of his time to visiting places of pilgrimage and leading a sort of wandering life. In the course of one of these wanderings he must have come to Rangpur where he formed a friendship with Ram Mohun Roy, spending a longer time than usual in his company, and ultimately accompanied him to Calcutta. The Swami, during his frequent travels, often visited Calcutta and spent several months at a time, in the company of Ram Mohun Roy. During one of these pere-

grinations he brought his younger brother Ram Chandra from his village home and placed him under the care of Ram Mohun Roy, who subsequently appointed him to the post of the minister of the Brahmo Samaj. He was the first minister of the Brahmo Samaj and afterwards became well-known as Pandit Ram Chandra Vidyabagish.

But the meetings of the *Atmiya Sabha* were not the only means of propagating his doctrines. For the first two years the *Atmiya Sabha* held its weekly meetings in the garden house of Ram Mohun Roy, at Manicktola, where Sivaprasad Misra used to recite and expound texts from the Hindu scriptures, and a well-known musician of the town, called Govinda Mala, used to sing hymns composed by Ram Mohun Roy and his friends. After two years the Society was removed first to Ram Mohun's Simla house, now situated on the Amherst Street, and subsequently to other places, finally finding shelter at the house of Behari Lal Chaubay at Barabazar, where in 1819 there took place a celebrated debate between Ram Mohun Roy and Subrahmanya Sastri, a Madras Brahmin, on the subject of idol-worship, in the presence of the leading citizens of Calcutta, including Radhakanta Deb, a leader of the orthodox Hindus at that time. In this debate, by a rare display of erudition and forensic skill, Ram Mohun Roy is said to have

vanquished his adversary. After 1819, the meetings of the *Atmiya Sabha* seem to have been discontinued for some years, partly on account of a harassing law-suit brought against him by his nephew and subsequently of another brought by the Raja of Burdwan, and partly on account of his absorption in organising the work of a Unitarian Congregation with Mr. Adam as its pastor, which we shall notice hereafter.

After having laid his battery well in Calcutta, Ram Mohun Roy began to publish in quick succession his celebrated tracts.

The following is the chronological order of his publications during the first five years :—Translation of the Vedanta in 1815 ; Abridgment of the Vedanta in Bengali, Hindustani and English ; and also the translation of the *Kena* and *Isha* Upanishads into Bengali and English in 1816 ; translation of *Katha* and *Mundaka* Upanishads into Bengali and English, and translation of *Man-dukya* Upanishad into Bengali, a defence of Hindu Theism (parts I and II) in Bengali and English, and also a letter to Mr. Digby in 1817 ; a Bengali tract against the custom of Suttee, the substance of a discussion with a Vaishnava Goswami and a tract explaining the meaning of the *Gayatri*, and English translation of the *Suttee* tract, all during 1818 ; the great

meeting of the *Atmiya Sabha* already alluded to and discussion with Subrahmanya Sastri in 1819; and an English version of his second Bengali tract on *Suttee* in 1820. The fact that many of these publications were issued in more than one language at the same time will give the reader some idea of his literary and propagandist activity during this period.

Many of these works, as is manifest from their titles, were translations of a number of sacred books of the Hindus, called Upanishads, books of uncertain date and origin, generally considered by European scholars as not later than six centuries before Christ, but ascribed by local tradition to remoter antiquity, and revered by the people as forming part of their sacred writings called the Vedas. During the course of his researches into the domain of Sanskrit literature, [Ram Mohun Roy was struck by the purity of the monotheistic doctrines of the Upanishads as contradistinguished from the prevailing corruptions of Hindu idolatry, and at once decided to publish some of them with his preface and translations.] This he considered to be the most effective means of rousing his countrymen to a sense of the superiority of the monotheistic creed. Nor were his expectations disappointed. Their publication, as also that of the other books mentioned in the list, soon pro-

duced an intense and wide-spread agitation in Indian society the like of which had seldom been witnessed in Bengal. Its effects extended to the southernmost Presidency of Madras and even reached the shores of England. All the engines of social persecution were set in motion against him. Many of his first followers deserted him and he was left single-handed to fight his battles. (The hostile feeling against him grew so quickly that, in 1817, when the first committee of management of the proposed Hindu College was in the course of formation, the leading men of the orthodox Hindu community of Calcutta refused to sit in it, though earnestly requested to do so by no less an authority than Sir Hyde East, the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, simply because the obnoxious reformer was connected with it. How Ram Mohun Roy behaved on the occasion will be told under the head of his doings in connection with the introduction of English education.) The spirit in which he bore all this persecution will be best illustrated by the following extract from the preface to his English edition of the Abridgment of the Vedanta :

“By taking the path which conscience and sincerity direct, I, born a Brahmin, have exposed myself to the complainings and reproaches, even of some of my relations whose prejudices are strong and whose temporal advantage depends upon the present system. But these, however accumulated, I can tranquilly bear.

"trusting that a day will arrive when my humble endeavours will be viewed with justice, perhaps acknowledged with gratitude. At any rate, whatever men may say, I cannot be deprived of this consolation : my motives are acceptable to that Being who beholds in secret and compensates openly ?"

In the year 1820, Ram Mohun Roy startled his friends as well as his enemies by a departure from the old line of his publications. Up to that time he had chiefly confined himself to the old Hindu scriptures as his authority in appealing to his countrymen. But this year he published a novel book with a novel title, "The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness." It was a collection of all the moral and spiritual precepts of Jesus, as recorded in the four Gospels, without the narratives of the miracles. This step, as I have said above, took his friends as well as his enemies by surprise. (The prejudice against Christianity was very strong at the time. Some idea of its violence can be formed from the fact that in 1830, when Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Alexander Duff, the celebrated Scotch missionary, arrived in Calcutta and wanted to open his first missionary school, so great was the national prejudice against the Christian missionary, that, in spite of a popular demand for English education, it required all the influence of Ram Mohun Roy, to whom Mr. Duff had applied for help, to secure the first batch of half a dozen students with whom to open the school.

Ram Mohun Roy published the "Precepts of Jesus" in the face of this strong national prejudice, and what induced him to do so is best narrated by himself in the following lines :—

"This simple code of religion and morality is so admirably calculated to elevate men's ideas to high and liberal notions of one God, who has equally subjected all living creatures, without distinction of caste, rank or wealth, to change, disappointment, pain and death; and has equally admitted all to be partakers of the bountiful mercies which he has lavished over nature, and is also so well fitted to regulate the conduct of the human race in the discharge of their various duties to God, to themselves and to society, that I cannot but hope the best effects from its promulgation in the present form."

"The Precepts of Jesus" called forth hostile criticism from an unexpected quarter. The Baptist missionaries of Serampore, Messrs. Carey and Marshman, vigorously assailed it in their weekly paper, "The Friend of India," as a tampering with what they believed to be God's word, contemptuously stigmatizing the compiler as a "heathen." The moral and spiritual portions of the Gospels alone, divested of the miraculous portions, were in their estimation insufficient for the purpose of human salvation. This gave rise to a controversy which finally turned upon the doctrine of Trinity, and Ram Mohun Roy successively published three appeals to the Christian public, the last appearing in 1823, in which by a rare display of polemical skill, as well as of profound Biblical learning, he

tried to uphold his favourite doctrine of the unity of the Godhead. It is evident that during the course of his researches into the Christian Scriptures he had not confined himself to the English rendering of the Bible alone, but had acquired Hebrew and Greek in order to be able to refer to the originals.

In the meantime an important event had happened which attracted considerable public notice. Mr. William Adam, a young Baptist missionary, who had come out from England a few years earlier to join the Serampore Mission, openly professed, in 1821, his conversion to Unitarian doctrines through the influence of Ram Mohun Roy. This great change in the life of Mr. Adam took place in the following manner:—Along with Ram Mohun Roy and Mr. Yates, another Christian missionary, Mr. Adam had undertaken to translate the four Gospels into Bengali. As the translation went on, many discussions incidentally arose on several points of doctrine relating to the divinity of Jesus Christ. Ram Mohun Roy naturally defended the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead, and brought his vast scholarship and logical acumen to bear upon the points of contention. As these discussions grew in point of intensity and concentration, Mr. Yates found his position in the translating committee uncomfortable and early

withdrew from it, leaving Ram Mohun Roy and Mr. Adam to carry on the work. The latter in his turn also found his position untenable and ultimately gave up his faith in the doctrine of the Trinity and made a public avowal of his conversion. The conversion of Mr. Adam, who was henceforward called by his Christian critics "the second fallen Adam," naturally gave rise to great scandal among the orthodox Christian community of the country ; and we can thus easily account for the great violence with which the Serampore missionaries attacked the Hindu reformer. From the columns of *The Friend of India* they descended into those of the *Samachar Durpan*, their Bengali organ, and indulged in very severe criticisms. Ram Mohun Roy, a valiant controversialist as he was, promptly replied to them. But the common courtesy of publishing his replies in the *Durpan* having been denied him, he was driven to the necessity of starting a magazine, called the *Brahmanical Magazine*, in which he vigorously assailed Trinitarian Christianity and tried to prove that it was no better than Hindu polytheism. He further challenged Christian theologians to defend their Trinitarian and Calvinistic doctrines and offered to print and circulate them at his own expense, of course with his rejoinders. This challenge drew into the field a new and unexpected combatant.

There was at that time an erratic and eccentric Englishman in Calcutta, Dr. Tytler by name, a man with some pretensions to scholarship, a professor of the Hindu College, and the Superintendent of the Medical School. His brother took up the challenge and sent in a paper defending orthodox Christianity, which Ram Mohun Roy refused to publish unless countersigned by a professed and accredited theologian. This incensed Mr. Tytler highly, and he rushed to the pages of the *Harkara* with his defence of orthodox Christianity. Under the name of Ram Doss, Ram Mohun assumed the roll of a sincere Hindu, and wrote satirical letters in reply to Mr. Tytler, proposing to join him in exposing the hateful reformer who was a common enemy to their common polytheistical faith. This incensed Mr. Tytler still more. He could not brook the idea of Christianity being classed with polytheistic Hinduism and gave vent to furious abuse, which Ram Mohun Roy took very coolly.

New responsibilities now devolved upon Ram Mohun Roy. The connection of Mr. Adam with the Baptist Mission soon ceased, and Ram Mohun had to help him in organising a Unitarian mission in Calcutta soon afterwards. By 1823 the feelings of the Serampore missionaries were so far embittered against Ram Mohun Roy that they refused to print his "Final Appeal to the Christian Public"

the Baptist Mission Press, where the first two appeals had been printed. Consequently he had to go through the trouble and expense of starting a new printing establishment, called the "Unitarian Press," to enable him to publish his appeal.

Thus, at the commencement of 1824, we find Ram Mohun Roy entering upon a new sphere of activity with Mr. William Adam as his colleague and with a new organisation of which he was the principal supporter. From this time to August, 1828, when the Brahma Sabha was started, Ram Mohun Roy delighted to call himself a Hindu Unitarian and his followers also imitated him in this. After the cessation of his connection with the Baptist Mission, Mr. Adam was provided with a hall in the buildings then occupied by the Bengal *Harkara* Office, where he used to hold Unitarian service every Sunday morning, which Ram Mohun Roy regularly attended with some members of his family and a number of disciples. The fact of his attending a Unitarian place of worship gave rise to public criticism, and his enemies, who were on the alert, used it as a weapon against him. In reply to these Ram Mohun Roy published in 1827, in the name of Chandra Sekhar Deb, one of his disciples, a tract called "The answer of a Hindu to the question : Why do you frequent a Unitarian place of worship instead of the numerously

attended Established Churches?", in which, amongst other reasons, he advanced the following :

"Because I feel already weary of the doctrine of Man-God or God-man frequently inculcated by the Brahmans in pursuance of their corrupt traditions : the same doctrine of Man-God, though preached by another body of priests, better dressed, better provided for, and eminently elevated by virtue of conquest, cannot effectually tend to excite my anxiety or curiosity to listen to it."

"Because Unitarians believe, profess, and inculcate the doctrine of the divine unity, a doctrine which I find firmly maintained both by the Christian Scriptures, and by our most ancient writings commonly called the Vēdas."

Thus it will be seen that the secret cord that bound him to Mr. Adam and the new organization was the doctrine of one God, which for many years had been something like the passion of his life.

It seems that the meetings of the *Atmiya Sabha* had been discontinued during the years that Ram Mohun Roy attended Mr. Adam's Unitarian services. Partly by his own contributions and partly by collections amongst his friends, Ram Mohun Roy raised a large sum to start and maintain the William Adam Establishment Fund and was himself steadfast in his adherence to the cause. But somehow or other the Unitarian Mission of Mr. Adam did not prosper. It failed to evoke on the one hand the sympathy of the European residents of the town and on the other hand the co-operation of many among the educa-

ted natives. Mr. Adam's congregation slowly melted away, leaving him almost alone in the field of labour.

Before finally giving up the Unitarian propaganda Ram Mohun Roy tried to utilize Mr. Adam in other ways. In 1823 he had opened a school called the Anglo-Hindu School, of which Mr. Adam was made a visitor, a post which the latter resigned on account of some difference with Ram Mohun Roy. Here a course of lectures by Mr. Adam on the principles of liberal religion was organised, which failed to attract audiences and had to be finally given up. At last Mr. Adam proposed to go out as a missionary to Madras, at least to make an honest use of the Unitarian Mission Fund, a large part of which was contributed by the Unitarians of England and America. This the Calcutta Committee did not like. Renewed efforts were made to resuscitate the Unitarian Mission; a Unitarian Association was established, a room in the *Harkara* Office was rented, and Mr. Adam went on holding his Unitarian services, but it again dwindled away by the time the Brahmo Samaj was established in August, 1828.

There are two accounts current about the establishment of the Brahmo Samaj. One is that, seeing the failure of his Unitarian Mission,

Mr. Adam himself suggested it as a substitute ; the other is that one day while Ram Mohun Roy was returning home in his carriage from the service of Mr. Adam, his young disciples, Tarachand Chakravarti and Chandra Sekhar Deb, who were with him, complained of the necessity of attending a Unitarian place of worship, in the absence of one entirely suited to their views and principles. Ram Mohun Roy took this complaint to heart and forthwith proceeded to call a meeting of his friends, at which it was decided to open a place for the unsectarian worship of the One True God. Many of his rich friends came forward to meet the expenses, and a house, ever since known in Brahmo history as the memorable Feringhee Kamal Bose's house, was rented to accommodate the first theistic congregation. Here on the 6th of Bhadra, corresponding to the 20th of August, 1828, the first Samaj was opened with Tarachand Chakravarti as its Secretary. Meetings of the Samaj were held every Saturday evening and the following order of service was observed :—Two Telugu Brahmins used to recite the Vedas in a side-room, screened from the view of the congregation, where non-Brahmins would not be admitted ; Utsavananda Vidyabagish would read texts of the Upanishads, which were afterwards explained in Bengali by Pandit Ram Chandra Vidyabagish ;

thirdly, a sermon would be preached or read by Ram Chandra Vidyabagish, followed by the singing of Govinda Mala. Some of these sermons, several of which were written by Ram Mohun Roy, have been recently published and are very interesting as giving some idea of the exact nature of the spiritual struggle that was then going on. The house in which the Samaj was opened had been previously occupied for sometime by the newly established Hindu College, and it was this house that Ram Mohun Roy secured in 1830 for Mr. Alexander Duff, the Scotch Missionary, for opening his English School.)

The opening of the new theistic service, which the common people of the time called the "Brahma Sabha," or the "One God Society," once more roused the enmity of the orthodox Hindu community of Calcutta. Their feelings of hostility were further aggravated by the rumour that now became current, and which soon proved to be too well-founded, that Lord William Bentinck meditated the abolition of the custom of burning Hindu widows. The decree of abolition of the Suttee was promulgated on 4th December, 1829. As they justly attributed the anti-Suttee agitation to Ram Mohun Roy, their resentment against him knew no bounds. ✓

Since the inauguration of the "Brahma Sabha"

on the 20th August, 1828, its services began to attract increasing numbers, and it secured new sympathisers. In this, it presented a contrast to Mr. Adam's declining congregation, so much so that within two years Ram Mohun Roy was enabled to raise sufficient funds for the purchase of a house on the Chitpur Road, to be a permanent place of worship for the members of the Society. The purchase was effected before January, 1830. In the middle of that month, only six days before the public consecration of Ram Mohun Roy's church, Ram Mohun Roy's adversaries called a meeting of all the leading men of Calcutta and organised a rival association called Dharma Sabha, with Bhowanicharan Banerji, a learned Brahmin, as its President, and Radha Kanta Deb (subsequently knighted and made Raja) as its Secretary.

Thus two influential factions arose in the Hindu society of Calcutta, the one led by Ram Mohun Roy, followed by a number of rich families whose position and influence were unquestioned, and the other led by Radha Kanta Deb, the recognized leader of orthodox Hinduism, followed by an imposing array of big names.

The "Dharma Sabha" began to use as its organ the *Samachar Chandrika*, which daily poured abuse on the reforming party, to which the latter

retorted in the *Kaumudi* with equal energy. The common people became participators in this great conflict; for the tracts of the reformers, mostly written in the simplest Bengali, appealed to them as much as to the enlightened classes. In the bathing ghats at the river-side, in market places, in public squares, in the drawing-rooms of influential citizens, everywhere the rivalry between the two associations became the subject of talk. Lines of comical poetry, caricaturing the principles of the great reformer, were composed by the wags of the time and passed from mouth to mouth, till the streets rang with laughter and ridicule. The agitation spread from Calcutta to the interior, and everywhere the question was discussed between the two parties. A large number of Brahmins who had accepted presents from the members of the "Brahma Sabha" on the occasion of the consecration ceremony, were excommunicated by the other party on that account, and the duty of supporting them devolved upon the rich amongst Ram Mohun Roy's friends, who cheerfully undertook it. Prominent amongst the Raja's co-adjutors at this time were Babus Dwarka Nath Tagore of Jorasanko, Kali Nath Munshi of Taki, and Mathuranath Mullick of Howrah. They bore the principal part of the expenses and formed a sort of Samaj triumvirate, as it were,

pledging themselves to carry on the Samaj work after the Raja's departure for England.

It was in the midst of these furious party contests that Ram Mohun Roy opened his church on the 11th of Magh, the 23rd of January, 1830, and left it in the hands of a few Trustees* for a visit to Europe. But previous to the establishment of the Brahmo Samaj, there was another step taken by Ram Mohun Roy for the propagation of Hindu Theism which is worthy of notice. In the year 1825 he had established a college called the Vedanta College, for the teaching of the monotheistic doctrines of the Vedanta. Ram Mohun Roy founded this institution because, to use the language of one of his biographers, "he saw in the Vedanta, rightly handled and rightly explained, a means for leading his countrymen out of their prevailing superstitions and idolatry into pure, and elevated theism." What became of this Vedanta College in after years is not known. It seems to have ceased to exist by the time the Brahmo Samaj was formally opened in 1830.

The opening of the Theistic Church was the ideal for which he had striven throughout his life. That was the one thing for which he had incessantly laboured. Indeed, his passion for universal religion was so great that there goes a local

* *Vide* Appendix A.

tradition that tears would trickle down his cheeks, when his friends would draw his attention to the idols carried in procession through the streets of Calcutta, and he would say—"Brother, brother, ours is universal religion ; it is far superior to idolatry." And it is also said that in order to carry out practically the idea outlined in the Trust Deed of the new Church, which he meant to be a meeting ground of all sects for the worship of the One True God, in whom they all believed, he would periodically collect children of other sects, such as the Christian and the Mahomedan, in the Samaj Hall and make them sing theistic hymns, and give instruction about universal religion ; a rude beginning of the present Sunday School system, so to say.

The period between 1820 and 1830 was also eventful from a literary point of view, as will be manifest from the following list of his publications during that period : Second Appeal to the Christian Public, *Brahmanical Magazine*, Parts I, II and III, with Bengali translation and a new Bengali newspaper called *Sambad Kaumudi*, in 1821 ; an Urdu paper called *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*, a tract entitled *Brief Remarks on Ancient Female Rights* and a book in Bengali called *Answers to Four Questions*, in 1822 ; third and final appeal to the Christian public, a memorial to the King of England on the subject

of the liberty of the press, Ramdoss papers relating to Christian controversy, *Brahmanical Magazine*, No. IV, letter to Lord Amherst on the subject of English education, a tract called "Humble Suggestions" and a book in Bengali called "Pathyapradan or Medicine for the Sick," all in 1823; a letter to Rev. H. Ware on the "Prospects of Christianity in India" and an "Appeal for famine-smitten natives in Southern India" in 1824; a tract on the different modes of worship, in 1825; a Bengali tract on the qualifications of a God-loving householder, a tract in Bengali on a controversy with a Kayastha, and a Grammar of the Bengali language in English, in 1826; a Sanskrit tract on "Divine worship by Gayatri" with an English translation of the same, the edition of a Sanskrit treatise against caste, and the previously noticed tract called "Answer of a Hindu to the question &c.," in 1827; a form of Divine worship and a collection of hymns composed by him and his friends, in 1828; "Religious Instructions founded on Sacred Authorities" in English and Sanskrit, a Bengali tract called "Anusthan," and a petition against Suttee, in 1829; a Bengali tract, a grammar of the Bengali language in Bengali, the Trust Deed of the Brahmo Samaj, an address to Lord William Bentinck, congratulating him for the abolition of Suttee, an abstract in English

of the arguments regarding the burning of widows, and a tract in English on the disposal of ancestral property by Hindus,—in 1830. It is indeed a matter for wonder how, in the midst of so much active work and such furious contests, Ram Mohan Roy could make time to write such masterly treatises on such a variety of subjects !

But we must not close this period of his career without briefly noticing his labours in other directions. Though occupying the foremost place in his endeavours to uplift his people, religious reformation did not absorb his whole attention. His exertions in other departments of reform were no less incessant and arduous.

First in order comes social reform. Allusion has already been made to the condition of the womanhood of Bengal at the time. They were living under the most abject form of social slavery. A young woman, the most virtuous wife, if she happened to incur the displeasure of her husband, could be cast aside by him any moment in favour of a more fortunate rival. The law afforded no protection against such a fate. Thus the position of every married woman in the family was, as it is even now, insecure. This was during the continuance of married life ; but their condition was still more deplorable when that life ceased. I need not repeat what is well-known to most readers.

Suffice it to say that as many as 309 widows were burnt alive with their husbands within the jurisdiction of Calcutta in the year 1828, the year in which the "Brahma Sabha" was established. It was but natural that the misery and degradation of womanhood should have strongly appealed to the sympathetic heart of Ram Mohun Roy. His earnest pleadings on their behalf form an important feature of his writings. The women of India have found no greater defender of their rights than the founder of Brahmoism. He defended the legal rights of females, advocated their right to education and enlightenment, and, above all, devoted all the energies of his noble soul to save them from a cruel death. The custom of burning widows with their husbands first roused his horror before he was much known. While he was at Rangpur in 1811, his brother Jagamohan died, when one of his widowed wives was burnt alive with him. Ram Mohun held this lady in high esteem, and the news of her cruel death gave such a shock to his feelings that he took a secret vow never to rest till this inhuman custom was abolished, and he was faithful to his vow throughout his life. Soon after his settlement in Calcutta, along with his efforts for religious reform, he kept up a parallel agitation for the abolition of the custom of Suttee and did not stop till it was abolished by law.

On reference to the history of the abolition of Suttee we find that the custom attracted the attention of the English rulers as early as January 1789, when a British Magistrate of Shahabad, a district in Behar, refused to permit the performance of a Suttee within his jurisdiction. The case was referred to Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General, for his decision. In reply to the referring magistrate, Lord Cornwallis laid down the policy of non-interference with Hindu religious customs as the principle to be followed in such cases. Sixteen years later, in the year 1805, another British Magistrate made a similar reference to Lord Wellesley's Government, whereupon the Governor-General moved the Nizam-at Adalat, the chief judicial authority in India at that time, to ascertain the exact teaching of the Hindu Shastras upon the subject. The Nizam-at in due course sent in the results of its investigation, but no practical measures came out of it till the year 1812, when a magistrate of Bundelkhund again made a reference to the Nizam-at and through it to Lord Moira, the Governor-General, which fortunately led in 1813 to the issue of a number of regulations partially restricting the custom. These regulations were further strengthened by important additions in 1815 and were finally issued in a collected form in 1817. From the statistics that the Government

collected in 1818, it was found, that within the short period of three years, between 1815 and 1818, no less than 2,365 widows had been burnt alive in different parts of the country, 1,528 of whom belonged to Calcutta and its surrounding districts alone. The publication of these regulations seems to have created some agitation in orthodox Hindu society, and a petition was sent up to the Government praying for their repeal. This petition evoked a counter-petition from Ram Mohun Roy and his friends which was submitted in August, 1818, and in which we find the following description of the cruel practice of Suttee :

“Your petitioners are fully aware from their own knowledge, and from the authority of credible eye-witnesses, that cases have frequently occurred where women have been induced by the persuasions of their next heirs, interested in their destruction, to burn themselves on the funeral pile of their husbands ; that others who were induced by fear to retract a resolution rashly expressed in the first moments of grief, of burning with their deceased husbands, have been forced upon the pile and there bound down with ropes and pressed with green bamboos until consumed with the flames ; that some, after flying from the flame, have been carried back by their relations and burnt to death. All these instances, your petitioners humbly submit, are murders according to every Shastra, as well as to the common sense of all nations.”

The agitation called forth Ram Mohun Roy's tracts on Suttee, one of which was concluded with the following passionate appeal on behalf of the female sex :—

“ Women are in general inferior to men in bodily strength and energy ; consequently, the male part of the community, taking advantage of their corporeal weakness, have denied to them those excellent merits that they are entitled to by nature, and afterwards they are apt to say that women are naturally incapable of acquiring those merits. But if we give the subject consideration, we may easily ascertain whether or not your accusation against them is consistent with justice. As to their inferiority in point of understanding, when did you ever afford them a fair opportunity of exhibiting their natural capacity ? How then can you accuse them of want of understanding ? If, after instruction in knowledge and wisdom, a person cannot comprehend or retain what has been taught him, we may consider him as deficient ; but as you keep women generally void of education and acquirements, you cannot, therefore, in justice, pronounce on their inferiority. On the contrary, Lilavati, Bhanumati, the wife of the prince of Karnat, and that of Kalidas, are celebrated for their thorough knowledge of all the Shastras : moreover, in the Vrihadaranyak Upanishad of the Yajur Veda it is clearly stated that Yagnavalkya imparted divine knowledge of the most difficult nature to his wife Maitreyi, who was able to follow and completely attain it !

Secondly. You charge them with want of resolution, at which I feel exceedingly surprised : for we constantly perceive, in a country where the name of death makes the male shudder, that the female, from her firmness of mind, offers to burn with the corpse of her deceased husband ; and yet you accuse those women of deficiency in point of resolution.

Thirdly. With regard to their trustworthiness, let us look minutely into the conduct of both sexes, and we may be equally enabled to ascertain which of them is the most frequently guilty of betraying friends. If we enumerate such women in each village or town as have been deceived by men, and such men as have been betrayed by women, I presume that the number of the deceived women would be found ten times greater than that of

the betrayed men. Men are, in general, able to read and write, and manage public affairs, by which means they easily promulgate such faults as women occasionally commit, but never consider as criminal the misconduct of men towards women. One fault they have, it must be acknowledged, which is, by considering others equally void of duplicity as themselves, to give their confidence too readily, from which they suffer much misery, even so far that some of them are misled to suffer themselves to be burnt to death.

In the fourth place, with respect to their subjection to the passions, this may be judged of by the custom of marriage as to the respective sexes; for one man may marry two or three, sometimes even ten wives and upwards; while a woman who marries but one husband, desires at his death to follow him, forsaking all worldly enjoyments, or to remain leading the austere life of an ascetic.

Fifthly. The accusation of their want of virtuous knowledge is an injustice. Observe what pain, what slighting, what contempt, and what afflictions their virtue enables them to support! How many Kulin Brahmins are there who marry ten or fifteen wives for the sake of money, that never see the greater number of them after the day of marriage, and visit others only three or four times in the course of their life. Still amongst those women, most, even without seeing or receiving any support from their husbands, living dependant on their fathers or brothers, and suffering much distress, continue to preserve their virtue; and when Brahmins, or those of other tribes, bring their wives to live with them, what misery do the women not suffer? At marriage the wife is recognised the half of her husband, but in after conduct they are treated worse than inferior animals. For the woman is employed to do the work of a slave in the house, such as, in her turn, to clean the place very early in the morning, whether cold or wet, to scour the dishes, to wash the floor, to cook night and day, to prepare and serve food for her husband, father and mother-in-law, brothers-in-law, and friends and connections (for, amongst Hindus more

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than in other tribes relations long reside together, and on this account quarrels are more common amongst brothers respecting their worldly-affairs). If in the preparation or serving up of the victuals they commit the smallest fault, what insult do they not receive from their husband, their mother-in-law, and the younger brothers of their husband ! After all the male part of the family have satisfied themselves, the women content themselves with what may be left, whether sufficient in quantity or not. Where Brahmins or Kayasthas are not wealthy, the women are obliged to attend to their cows and to prepare cow-dung for firing. In the afternoon they fetch water from the river or tank ; and at night perform the office of menial servants in making the beds. In case of any fault or omission in the performance of those labours, they receive injurious treatment. Should the husband acquire wealth, he indulges in criminal amours to her perfect knowledge, and almost under her eyes, and does not see her perhaps once a month. As long as the husband is poor she suffers every kind of trouble, and when he becomes rich she is altogether heart-broken. All this pain and affliction their virtue alone enables them to support. Where a husband takes two or three wives to live with him, they are subjected to mental miseries and constant quarrels. Even this distressed situation they virtuously endure. Sometimes it happens that the husband, from a preference for one of his wives, behaves cruelly to another. Amongst the lower classes, and those even of the better classes who have not associated with good company, the wife, on the slightest fault, or even on bare suspicion of her misconduct, is chastised as a thief. Respect for virtue and their reputation generally makes them forgive even this treatment. If, unable to bear such cruel usage, a wife leaves her husband's house to live separately from him, then the influence of the husband with the magisterial authority is sufficient to place her again in his hands ; when, in revenge for her quitting him, he seizes every pretext to torment her in various ways, and sometimes even puts her privately to death. These are facts occurring every day, and not

to be denied. What I lament is, that seeing the women thus dependent and exposed to every misery, you feel for them no compassion that might exempt them from being tied down and burnt to death."

Ram Mohun Roy, however, did not confine himself to mere literary controversy on the subject. He forthwith organised his friends into something like a Vigilance Committee, whose members never failed to be present whenever there was a case of Suttee in or near Calcutta, to see that no force was employed, and that the other requirements of the law, as laid down in the regulations, were fulfilled. Thus the fight was carried on in an acute and concentrated form till Lord W. Bentinck appeared on the scene and earnestly took up the question for its final decision in December, 1829, as already noticed.

It is worthy of mention that Ram Mohun Roy also carried on an agitation on the subject in the pages of his Bengali journal, the *Kaumudi*, and in 1822 published a tract on "The Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Females according to the Hindu Law of Inheritance," in which he decried polygamy and showed the abject misery in which widows live, indirectly proving thereby that their self-immolation in many cases was an escape from greater misery. On the subject of polygamy his contention was that every man desirous of taking a second wife during

the life-time of the first should be obliged by law to prove before a Court of Justice, or some other suitable legal authority, that one of the causes for polygamy, authorised by the Hindu Shastras, existed in his case. Even this modicum of reform, if enforced at the present time, would save hundreds of women from a miserable lot.

The service that Ram Mohun Roy rendered to the cause of the suppression of Suttee lay in strengthening the hands of the Government, by proving from ancient Hindu Scriptures that self-immolation of a widow is nowhere enjoined as a duty, and that a life of piety and self-abnegation was considered more virtuous, points on which the Governor-General based the preamble of the anti-Suttee decree.

But his labours in that connection did not terminate with the passing of Lord W. Bentinck's decree. His adversaries roused themselves up once more and, as early as the 14th January, 1830, presented to Lord William Bentinck a petition, signed by 800 inhabitants of Calcutta and backed by the opinions of 120 Pandits, in which they tried to show that the position taken up by the Governor-General was an untenable one. Another petition with a similar import, signed by 340 persons from the mofussil, was also submitted at the same time. Ram Mohun Roy was on the alert.

Two days after, *i.e.*, on the 16th January, a congratulatory petition signed by 300 native inhabitants of Calcutta and another signed by 800 Christians, thanking the Governor-General for his humane measure, were sent in. The very next day, *i.e.*, the 17th of January, the opponents of the measure held a public meeting and resolved to appeal to the authorities in England. At this meeting they also established the *Dharma Sabha*, already referred to, with an initial fund of Rs. 11,260, subscribed on the spot, for counteracting the influence of Ram Mohun Roy's movement.

Ram Mohun Roy was not to be dismayed by the opposition thus set up. He soon published a tract called "The Abstract of the Arguments regarding the Burning of Widows considered as a Religious Rite," in which he tried to meet the arguments of the 120 pandits. And one of the reasons which influenced him to undertake a voyage to England was to be able to thwart the efforts of his adversaries for the repeal of Lord W. Bentinck's abolition decree. Thus, to the last, he fought for his Hindu country-women.

(Ram Mohun Roy's contribution to the cause of English education was no less remarkable. He was first trained as a Persian scholar, to which he subsequently added an intimate knowledge of Sanskrit. Very few men of his time could claim

a more intimate acquaintance with the ancient learning of his people than he ; (yet by his genius and foresight he could see that the future regeneration of his country lay in a due cultivation of the Western sciences. Accordingly, from the very first, he became a strong advocate of English education.) In 1816, in consultation with Mr. David Hare, his friend and fellow-worker, he formed the plan of opening an educational institution for the instruction of the youth of his country in the science and literature of Europe. The report of this conference, it seems, was carried by Baidyanath Mukerji, a member of the *Atmiya Sabha*, to Sir Hyde East, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who earnestly took up the proposal and sent round Baidyanath to sound the Hindu citizens of the town. Within a few days a meeting of the leading members of the Hindu community was convened at the house of the Chief Justice. The connection of Ram Mohun Roy with the scheme was not discovered in the beginning, but when it came to be generally known that he was one of the promoters of the scheme and was likely to be associated with the committee, his Hindu adversaries held back, urgently demanding the removal of his name from the list. Ram Mohun Roy, apprised by David Hare of the difficulty, at once wrote to Sir Hyde East resigning his connection

with the committee, thus removing an obstacle from the way of the immediate working out of the scheme. (He also started in 1823 and maintained with his own funds an English School in another part of the town, where Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, the second great leader of the Brahmo movement, received his first education.)

(In 1823, the first Council of Education was appointed, and the lakh of rupees that had been set apart from 1813 for the encouragement of learning among the native races was placed in the hands of the Council for the furtherance of education. But the English gentlemen who formed that Council were, many of them, oriental scholars and several of them held very high posts under Government. The policy of Lord Amherst, the Governor-General of that time, took its colouring from these orientalists, and it was decided to open a college in Calcutta for the teaching of the Sanskrit language. Ram Mohun Roy took this decision as a move in the wrong direction and at once addressed a letter of protest to the Governor-General, from which the following extracts are made :—

“ If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner the

Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction embracing Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy, with other useful sciences, which may be accomplished with the sums proposed by employing a few gentlemen of talent and learning, educated in Europe and providing a college furnished with necessary books, implements and other apparatus."

When we reflect that these lines were penned by a native of Bengal at a time when the current ideas of education were low and old-fashioned, our wonder knows no bounds, and we feel them to be characteristic of the great man whom Providence had designed to be the maker of New India.

His help towards the promotion of the cause of English education was ever ready (Shortly before his departure for England in 1830, when the Rev. Alexander Duff, the Scottish Missionary, arrived and wanted to open an English school, Ram Mohun Roy secured the first house for him and also the first batch of half a dozen students, as has been noticed before.)

(His exertions for the introduction of English education were not however crowned with success till two years after his death, when in March, 1835, Lord William Bentinck, backed by Lord Macaulay, issued his famous Education Decree, which formally

inaugurated the policy of English education, which has borne such signal fruits.)

His exertions in another direction were equally vigorous. He found that there was no literature of the people. All that existed of that kind were a few poetical works of the preceding two or three centuries. There were no prose works, at least not any popularly known, and people knew not how to read or write prose. The Serampore missionaries and the Fort William College Pandits had been trying for some years past to remove that want, but the glory of having firmly laid the foundations of modern Bengali literature belongs to Ram Mohun Roy. For the first time in the history of the country, Ram Mohun Roy departed from the old method of carrying on learned discussions in a learned language and he wrote his tracts in the common language of the people. Thus an impetus was given to national literature which has produced in later times such marvellous results. [He wrote a grammar and a geography in the Bengali language at the instance of the School Book Society, for the education of the common people, and always made it a point to communicate useful knowledge to his countrymen through the columns of his Bengali newspaper, the *Sambad Kaumudi*, started in 1821 and his Persian journal, the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*

started in 1822. The examples of the *Kaumudi* and the *Mirat* were soon followed by his adversaries in starting the *Samachar Chandrika* and the *Jami-jehannus* to carry on the agitation against the Suttee and other controversies with the reforming party. But the good days for native journalism inaugurated by Lord Hastings, the Governor-General, by relaxing the severe press restrictions of former times, were soon clouded by the temporary accession to the post of Governor-General in 1823 of Mr. John Adam, a member of the Civil Service. Under the influence of his bureaucratic advisers, Mr. Adam took stringent measures for the suppression of the liberty of the press. For the fault of criticising an administrative measure of the Government, Mr. Buckingham, the editor of the *Calcutta Journal*, was deported from India at two months' notice; and Mr. Sanford Arnot, his assistant, was arrested in his office for a similar offence and was put on board an England-going vessel. And to put a finish to such arbitrary proceedings, a Press Ordinance was passed by the Governor-General's Council which imposed the severest censorship upon the entire Press, both Anglo-Indian and Indian, and made it obligatory on the part of intending proprietors and publishers of newspapers or other periodicals to obtain a license from the Governor-General. This Ordinance was passed without notice on the 14th

of March, 1823, and was pushed through the Supreme Court, according to the law then existing, after only twenty days' publication in that Court. Ram Mohun Roy tried to rouse his countrymen to a sense of the seriousness of the Government measure, got up a memorial for the repeal of the Ordinance, engaged the services of two lawyers and fought an earnest battle in the Supreme Court before that Ordinance could receive the sanction of that Court and thereby assume the authority of a duly enacted law. He was defeated in his object, but did not stop there, and got up a public petition to the King of England, in which he tried to prove by a rare display of sound judgment and logical reasoning that, in a country situated like India, the liberty of the press was an essential condition for good government. This document has been justly styled the "Areopagitica" of modern Indian History. Unfortunately his appeal to the King of England also was fruitless, though it must be admitted that the steps he took on this occasion and the discussions he started paved the way for the liberal measure of Sir Charles Metcalfe which liberated the Indian Press in 1835.

(But it was not only political or polemical discussions for which Ram Mohun Roy used his papers. He looked upon them as means of popular education and through them always

tried to convey useful knowledge to his countrymen; and it was for this reason that he fought so hard to save his papers from the threatened extinction.) *The Mirat* had to be given up after a short career of 16 months in consequence of the new Ordinance, but the *Kaumudi* was kept up till some years after the death of its founder.

[It should also be mentioned in passing that there were other spheres of his activity. He wrote tracts for the vindication of the legal rights of the people, and got up an agitation for the protection of their political interests. So great was his love of liberty that he followed with intense interest the course of the French Revolution and is said to have given a public dinner in the Town Hall of Calcutta as a mark of his joy at the establishment of constitutional government in Spain.]

[Ram Mohun Roy closed his remarkable career of almost superhuman activity with a visit to Europe,] which also was pregnant with important results. After the opening of the Brahmo Samaj, he proceeded to make provision for the management of its affairs, published his second English tract on Suttee, and began to make preparations for his voyage to Europe. The immediate object of his visit to that country was to plead before the authorities of the East India Company the case of the ex-Emperor of Delhi, with which he was entrusted

as his ambassador. But his real object was two-fold : first, to baffle the efforts of his adversaries to get Bentinck's Sutte enactment repealed, and, secondly, to be present in England during the deliberations of Parliament on the occasion of the renewal of the East India Company's Charter.

The project of visiting Europe was an old one in the mind of Ram Mohun Roy, at least as old as his settlement in Calcutta in 1814 ; for we find it mentioned in a letter of Rev. Mr. Yates of the Baptist Mission in Calcutta, written in 1815, that Ram Mohun Roy had expressed to him in that year his intention of visiting England to study at one of the Universities. He carried out his project of a European visit after so many years. He started for Europe on the 19th November, 1830, and arrived at Liverpool on the 8th of April, 1831, voyaging round the Cape of Good Hope, as was the custom with sailing vessels in those days. Some idea of his love of liberty may be formed from the fact that at the Cape of Good Hope, though seriously injured and made lame for several months by an accident, he insisted upon being carried to a French vessel where he saw the flag of liberty flying, so that he might be able to do homage to that flag. The sight of the glorious tri-colour kindled his enthusiasm and made him for the time being insensible to pain. The French received

him warmly and he was conducted over the vessel beneath the revolutionary flag. When returning he shouted, unmindful of his pain, "Glory, glory, glory to France!"

After his arrival in England he met, amongst others, William Roscoe, the historian of the Medicis, and Jeremy Bentham, the utilitarian philosopher. During his stay in London he was publicly received at the Annual Meeting of the Unitarians of England; he was honoured with a public dinner by the East India Company in September; and as part of his public activities, he submitted three papers on the Revenue System of India, the Judicial System of India and the Material Condition of India before a Committee of the House of Commons. At the Coronation of George IV, he was honoured with a place amongst Foreign Ambassadors and was personally presented to the King. In 1832 when the Reform Bill came up for discussion, he threw himself entirely into the spirit of that Bill and went so far as to make a public declaration that, in case the objects of that Bill were defeated, he would give up his residence in the dominions of England and would settle down in America. During this year also he republished some of his Indian Tracts for the information of his English friends and visited France towards the end of the year, where he had

the honour of dining with the French King more than once.. In the beginning of 1833 he returned to England, was present at the first sitting of the reformed Parliament and had the satisfaction of seeing the appeal of his adversaries against the abolition of Suttee rejected by that body. It was in this year also that the East India Company's charter was renewed, conferring solid privileges on the Indian people, a result towards which the Raja had earnestly worked.

In the beginning of September of that year he visited Bristol at the urgent invitation of his Unitarian friends, with a view to give his fatigued constitution a much-needed rest previous to his return to his native land. But alas! Providence had ruled otherwise. Within a few days of his arrival he was attacked with a fatal malady which terminated his noble career on the 27th of September. Miss Hare, the niece of his friend, Mr. David Hare of Calcutta, who attended during his last moments, says, that he finally closed his lips with the word, *aum*, the well-known Vedic syllable meaning the Supreme Being. His remains were followed to the grave by his Indian attendants and a few Unitarian friends. His mortal remains now rest in the Arno's Vale Cemetery at Bristol, over which his friend and disciple, Dwaraka Nath Tagore, during his visit to England, built a beautiful mausoleum.

During the absence of Ram Mohun Roy in England, his eldest son Radha Prasad Roy, who was one of the Trustees, managed the affairs of the Samaj, aided by the munificent support of Babu Dwaraka Nath Tagore. But soon after the death of the Raja, he was called away to Delhi to settle certain disputed pecuniary claims of his father. After his return from Delhi he ceased to take an active interest in the new Church. Tara Chand Chakravarti and Chandra Sekhar Dev, the most zealous supporters of the new Church, left Calcutta during the Raja's absence and went to Burdwan, where they secured some employment in the Burdwan Raja's estate. Many of Ram Mohun Roy's friends, mentioned previously, who had been drawn into the movement more by his personal influence than by any genuine sympathy, fell off one by one, till at last within a few years none remained excepting Babu Dwaraka Nath Tagore, whose manager was also the manager of the Samaj, and Pandit Ram Chandra Vidyabagish, the chosen friend and disciple of Ram Mohun Roy, who was the minister appointed by him.

Before we finally part with Ram Mohun Roy, let us try to form some idea of the motives that actuated him and also of the main features of his work. As to his leading motive in launching into a career of reform, we have his own

testimony. In the preface to his translation of the Vedant, he says :—

“ My constant reflections on the inconvenient or rather injurious rites, introduced by the peculiar practice of Hindu idolatry, which more than any other pagan worship, destroys the texture of society, together with compassion for my countrymen, have compelled me to use every possible effort to awaken them from their dream of error.”

But he met at the outset with a serious difficulty. How was he to awaken them? He felt, as many preachers of a reformed doctrine have felt ever since, that the mass of his countrymen had fallen into such a state of abject mental and spiritual slavery, that a simple appeal to their reason and common sense would be ineffectual, and that they would not pay heed to anything unsupported by the authority of what they considered to be their sacred books. Accordingly, he fell back upon the monotheistical writings of the Vedant, which were of unquestionable authority in matters of Hindu theology. With the general decline of learning these writings had fallen into disuse in the province of Bengal and there were very few men even amongst those who were reputed to be learned at that time, who were familiar with their contents. Ram Mohun Roy believed that the translation and publication of these books would arouse public attention and would lead his countrymen to examine the nature

of the current forms of their idolatry. Accordingly, he undertook the arduous task of translating these difficult books into a vernacular which was till then crude and undeveloped and publishing them at a tremendous cost to himself. It was not his intention to appeal to the learned few ; his great and generous heart yearned to communicate light to all classes of his countrymen. Consequently, he translated the most important of his tracts into two and sometimes three of the current languages of the people and distributed all his publications free of charge.

The first feeling of his adversaries was one of surprise. He spoke of things they had long forgotten. But they soon recovered from their first amazement and within a short time a class of intelligent defenders of the current system of idolatry appeared, who tried to meet him on his own ground. The old controversy between *knowledge* and *ceremonialism*, which in the present case meant idolatrous worship, was once more revived.

The orthodox adversaries alleged : First, "men must perform without omission all the rites and duties prescribed in the Vedas and Smritis before acquiring knowledge of God." To which Ram Mohun Roy replied :—"We admit that it is proper in man to observe the duties and rites prescribed by the *shastra* for each class according

to their religious order, in acquiring knowledge respecting God. But we can by no means admit the necessity of observing those duties and rites as *indispensable* steps towards attaining divine knowledge."

Secondly they said : " the difficulty of attaining a knowledge of the Invisible and Almighty Spirit is evident from a large number of verses."

The following was the reply :—" I agree with them in that point ; that the attainment of the perfect knowledge of the nature of the Godhead is certainly difficult, or rather impossible ; but to read the existence of the Almighty Being in His works of nature is not, I will dare say, so difficult to the mind of a man possessed of common sense, and unfettered by prejudice."

Thirdly, they continued : " The worship of the Divine attributes under various representations, by means of consecrated objects, is prescribed by scripture to the human race, by way of mental exercise". The answer was :—"I cannot admit that the worship of these attributes under various representations, by means of consecrated objects, has been prescribed by the Vedas to the Human race ; as this kind of worship of consecrated objects is enjoined by the Shastra to those only who are incapable of raising their minds to the notion of an invisible Supreme Being".

Fourthly, his adversaries held :—"That which cannot be conceived cannot be worshipped."

He said in reply :—"Should the learned Brahmin consider a full conception of the nature, essence or qualities of the Supreme Being, or a physical picture truly representing the Almighty Power, with offerings of flowers, leaves and viands, as essential to adoration, I agree with the learned Brahmin with respect to the impossibility of the worship of God. But, should adoration imply only the elevation of the mind to the conviction of the existence of the Omnipresent Deity, as testified by His wise and wonderful works and continual contemplation of His power as so displayed, together with a constant sense of the gratitude which we naturally owe Him, for our existence, sensation and comfort, I never will hesitate to assert that His adoration is not only possible, and practicable, but even incumbent on every rational creature."

Fifthly, they took objection to the mode of congregational worship by saying :—"But the holding of meetings, playing music, singing songs, and dancing, which are ranked among carnal pleasures, are not ordained by scripture as mental purification." ✓

Ram Mohun Roy replied :—"The practice of dancing in divine worship, I agree, is not ordained

by the scriptures, and accordingly never was introduced in our worship; any mention of dancing in the *Calcutta Gazette* must, therefore, have proceeded from misinformation of the editor. But respecting the propriety of introducing monotheistical songs in the divine worship, I beg leave to refer the gentleman to the texts 114th and 115th of the 3rd chapter of Yajnavalca, who authorizes not only scriptural music in divine contemplation, but also the songs that are composed by the vulgar. It is also evident that any interesting idea is calculated to make more impression upon the mind, when conveyed in musical verses, than when delivered in the form of common conversation."

Sixthly, they advanced :—" It appears from the perusal of the Vedant Shastra, that God is one eternal.....and the soul is not different from him, nor is there any other real existence besides him.....The visible world is, as it says, created by Maya alone." To which the answer was :—"The term Maya implies primarily the power of creation, and secondarily, its effect, which is the Universe. The Vedant by comparing the world with the misconceived notion of a snake, when a rope really exists, means that the world like the supposed snake has no independent existence, that it receives its existence from the Supreme

Being "..... "and in declaring that God is all in all and that there is no other substance except God, the Vedant means that existence in reality belongs to God alone. He is consequently true and omnipresent, nothing else can bear the name of true existence. We find the phrase, God is all in all, in Christian books, and I suppose they do not mean by such words that pots, mats, &c., are Gods. I am inclined to believe that by these forms they mean the omnipresence of God."

Another point which was stoutly urged by his opponents and as persistently denied by him was that the life of a householder was not favourable to a true knowledge of God. The controversy on the above subject occupies many pages of his Bengali tracts, in all of which he uniformly pointed out that such a knowledge is attainable ; and in support of his position adduced authority from the texts of well-known scriptures and also cited the example of Janaka and others who attained to the true knowledge of God, though living surrounded by all the comforts of life.

Thus it will be seen that his attempt to revive monotheism in this country on the basis of the Vedant at once brought him face to face with a number of deep-seated popular prejudices and also with a number of combatants who chose their weapons from the same scriptural armoury. The

pantheistic and anti-social notions of the Vedant were too deep-rooted in the popular mind to be easily shaken off. Consequently the effect was that what he wanted to start as a new religious culture intended for the masses of his countrymen was regarded by his orthodox contemporaries as a mere caricature of the old Vedant and drew in fact only a limited number of enlightened men whose faith in Hinduism had been previously shaken by other causes. He was himself an educated, influential and rich man and his first followers were most of them men of that stamp. The common people were roused and agitated but were not drawn into the movement. Nor were any measures, beyond the publication of his writings in the language of the people, adopted for that purpose. This was an inherent defect inseparable from the attempt to organise the movement on the old and highly philosophical Vedantic lines. There was another. Proceeding on the strict lines of the Shastras, he could not but concede to his adversaries that the old scriptures tolerated idolatrous practices as an inferior kind of culture necessary for the ignorant and innocuous in the case of the wise. The admission of this principle largely neutralized the effects of his earnest protest against the idolatry of his countrymen; and as a consequence the Brahmo Samaj long remained only as a meeting place of a

number of educated and influential persons who intellectually sympathised with the doctrine of monotheism, but practically adhered to all the idolatrous rites in private life. There was not that fervid enthusiasm, seeking to mould individual life and reconstruct society, which was introduced into the movement at a later period. There was more of the spirit of a cautious philosopher than of the consuming fire of a prophet in him.

But Ram Mohun Roy achieved three important victories. First, he silenced his adversaries by an imposing array of scriptural authorities; secondly, he forced out of them a concession, that idolatry was suited only to ignorant minds. Thus a high level of superiority was secured for the doctrines of the Samaj, from which no subsequent attacks of its opponents have been able to dislodge it. Even now, the Neo-Hindu school of writers, who declaim against it, do not go farther than asserting that idolatry is only symbolical and is useful only as a means of attaining true knowledge of God. Thirdly, he successfully arrested that speedy flow of national sentiment in favour of the worst forms of idolatry and other social evils concomitant with it, which was left undisturbed even under the operation of the Mahommedan rule. (The impetus given by him, backed of course by

English education, has wonderfully accelerated the course of religious and social reform in Bengal. Very few of the Indian people now know how much of their present political and social advancement they owe to the impulse communicated by Ram Mohun Roy.) (With the far-seeing eye of genius he beheld the dawning future of India and went forward with intrepid steps to open the door for the new light. The greatness of his work will be fully revealed in ages to come.

He could not do much towards building up a constructive theism. The form of service that Ram Mohun Roy introduced in the Samaj consisted of exposition of the Upanishads, and the delivery of discourses, accompanied by the singing of hymns. It is true he compiled and published a short form of service based on the Gayatri, which consisted of praise and prayer; but we learn, upon the authority of Babu Rajnarāin Bose, the late President of the Adi Brahmo Samaj and one of the joint editors of the Raja's Bengali works, that it was never adopted as a part of the form of public worship in the Samaj.

In fact the mission of Ram Mohun Roy was a simple one, namely to call his countrymen to discard idolatry and come to the worship of the one true God. His duty was that of a sturdy pioneer, working single-handed to clear away a mass of

popular prejudice and prepare the way for those who were coming after him. His work was mainly negative and reformatory and not positive and constructive. The mission he unconsciously fulfilled and to which he was called was to combine in the reawakened spiritual aspirations of the people, the spiritual ideals of the East and the West, a mission which the Brahmo Samaj is still pursuing in this land. For the answer to deeper questions of the nature and the attributes of the Supreme, he turned to Hindu writings ; for his thorough knowledge of them had convinced him of the deeply and truly spiritual character of their speculations. He turned away from the extra-cosmic and anthropomorphic conceptions of the Deity familiar to old Judaism, and largely reproduced in current forms of orthodox Christianity and Mahomedanism, but accepted with profound admiration the moral and social ideals of the Christian faith. Summarily speaking, he derived his ideas on the spiritual side from Hindu sources ; but his passion for Unitarianism was derived from Mahomedanism and many of his moral ideas he got from the precepts of Jesus. It was thus that the root ideas of the three systems were incorporated in the fundamental conceptions of a Universal Religion.

The nature of the message that he delivered

to his people will be gathered from the following translations of some of the hymns he composed for the use of his Samaj :—

I

“ Think of that terrible last day of life.

Everyone else will speak but thou wilt be mute.

Whomsoever thou lovest most, whether wife, or child, the same will cause thee proportionate pain.

Thy house will rend with cries, friends will sit mute before thee, thy vision will grow dim, thy pulse sinking, and thy whole frame in a state of collapse.

Be warned therefore ; discard all vanity and pride, practise unworldliness and place reliance upon truth.”

2

“ Meditate on the Only One,

Who pervades land, water and air, Who has created this universe, of which there is no bound ; He knows all, but none can know Him.

He is the lord of lords, the god of gods, and the master of masters ; let us know this adorable One.”

3

“ A thing that surpasseth speech, how can it be described in words ?

Of Him the Universe is a shadow. He is without likeness, as the scriptures declare. Where can we find His likeness ?

If thou wouldst know, meditate with singleness of mind. Then wilt thou attain true knowledge, and wilt be free from error,—I know no other way."

4

"Ignorance has clouded thy knowledge ; what doest thou? Forgetting the Supreme, takest thou other things as such ?

The pursuit of a mirage in the hope of water is a fruitless speculation in which I see no gain. Thou hast forsaken the truth in ignorance, and hast accepted falsehood in its stead."

It should also be stated in this place, that the hymns of Ram Mohun Roy have found a place in the body of our widely circulated national devotional songs. Many who scarcely know his multi-form activities in other directions, know him as one of the composers of some of the loftiest songs in the Bengali language. The introduction of singing as a part of religious service was in itself a great act of reformation. In this he rose superior to the prevailing Hindu and Mahomedan notions of the time. In introducing singing into the service of the Samaj he had to fight with some difficulties. Even many of his followers, who were unused to the idea, would, when asked to sing, introduce idolatrous songs or ordinary love songs, when the

Raja had to interfere, and suggest other particular hymns suited to the occasion.

The sum total of the Raja's teachings, spread over many volumes of controversy, seems to be that the doctrine of the One True God is the universal element in all religions, and as such forms an article of faith of universal religion for mankind; but the practical applications of that universal religion are to be always local and national: a position to which the Brahmo Samaj is still true and faithful. As a herald of the New Age opening with the ever memorable and eventful nineteenth century, he held up before men a new faith, which was universal in its sympathies and whose cardinal principle was that the '*service of man is the service of God.*'

CHAPTER II

ADI BRAHMO SAMAJ

The body of worshippers who used to assemble week after week in the church consecrated by Ram Mohun Roy, originally known as the Brahma Sabha, was latterly called the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj. This name it retained till the year 1866, the year of the first schism, after which it was changed, in 1868, into the Adi or Original Brahmo Samaj, to indicate its precedence in point of time to the younger branches. It is a name by which it is now generally known, and in order to save the reader the unnecessary trouble of bearing in mind now defunct names, I shall call it by that name from the earliest period of its history.

The two prominent figures that meet our eyes as struggling to keep up the infant Church during the period of depression that followed the death of Ram Mohun Roy in 1833, were Dwarakanath Tagore and Pandit Ram Chandra Vidyabagish. Of these two, Dwarakanath Tagore was a man of the world, a man of vast social influence, and one who was associated with almost all the public movements of the day. The calls on his time and attention were varied and numerous ; consequently it was but a small portion of either, that he could

devote to the affairs of the Church. But he lent the services of his own *dewan* to manage those affairs and also mainly bore the cost of keeping up the weekly service, contributing eighty rupees per month for that purpose. The internal management, as well as the conduct of the services of the new church was left entirely in the hands of Pandit Ram Chandra Vidyabagish, the most faithful of the Raja's followers. He had been placed under the guidance of Ram Mohun Roy, when a young man, by his elder brother, Hariharananda Tirthaswami, as has been stated in the last chapter, and he owed his position and influence chiefly to the fostering care of the Raja. He remembered all this with gratitude and tried his best to keep up the fire his master had kindled. To him, for some years, it was a melancholy task, like the daily lighting of a solitary lamp in a grave-yard.

At first Pandit Ram Chandra was not a very staunch adherent of the cause. Like St. Peter of the Gospels, he showed signs of wavering. He was momentarily thrown out of balance, it is said, by the violent storm that broke out in Hindu society upon the suppression of the Suttee and affixed his signature to the petition got up by the orthodox Hindus of Calcutta for the repeal of Lord William Bentinck's humane Act. But like Peter he soon repented of his course and made amends by

earnestly taking up the work left by Ram Mohun Roy, and devoting his energies to it. When everybody else turned his back upon the movement, and when its enemies began to rejoice at what they considered to be its final collapse, the steadfast devotion of this poor Brahmin alone never faltered. "He minded no rain or storm," to use an expression used by Devendra Nath Tagore, "but was always at his place on the appointed day of the service." To the best of his light he ministered to the spiritual needs of those who cared to attend his services. In 1843, Devendra Nath Tagore formally joined the Brahmo Samaj, and in 1844 we find Ram Chandra Vidyabagish dying at Moorshidabad on his way to Benares. Thus it would seem as if from the day of Ram Mohun Roy's death he was waiting till he could find some worthy successor to make over to him the sacred charge that his departed master had entrusted to him. He sealed his great love for Ram Mohun Roy's Samaj by a legacy of Rs. 500, a very large sum considering his means, that he left by his Will to the Samaj.

The year 1838 witnessed a very important event, which, though attracting little notice at the time, had yet the most far-reaching consequences. It was the conversion of Devendra Nath Tagore, the eldest son of Dwarakanath Tagore, the "Indian Cræsus," as they called him at the time. Devendra

Nath was then in his twentieth year, having been born in the year 1817. He was brought up in the lap of luxury. From his infancy he was surrounded by all the pomp and power that the great wealth and unbounded social influence of his father could command. Being the eldest born of the house, he was an object of care and was daily courted by the numerous visitors, suitors, parasites and priests who frequented that house. Everything that could feed desire or beguile the fancy was there. All the means and opportunities of self-indulgence were near at hand. Yet Providence led young Devendra Nath, at that early age, to turn his back upon all the pleasures and follies of youth. His conversion had something of the miraculous about it. As a boy he was trained up by his grand-mother, who had charge of his first education, to be a devout believer in idolatry. He sincerely believed that the four-handed goddess Kali, one of the images of Sakti or Parvati, the wife of Siva, worshipped by the Tantrics, before whose image he daily bowed as he passed to his school, had, in some inscrutable way, power over his destiny. But the silent observation of the stars one solitary night filled his mind with wonder, and, for the first time in his life, the thought forced itself upon his mind, that the grand Universe he saw before him could not have proceeded from

any finite being. However strange it may appear, this simple thought was a revelation to him. It was a sudden thought that gleamed for a moment like a flash of lightning and then passed away; but the impression that it left upon his mind did not wear off so soon. From that day he became conscious of the insufficiency of the support upon which he had been up to that time leaning, a feeling that was further confirmed, shortly afterwards, by the death of his grand-mother, at whose cremation ceremony he happened to be present. The scenes in the place of cremation deeply impressed him with the vanity of human life. He fell into melancholy musings, in the midst of which he was roused up, as it were, by a sudden vision of that "object without whom the soul finds no rest." "It immersed his mind," to use his own language, "in heavenly bliss." But that heavenly bliss also passed away in a short time, leaving him disconsolate and dry. In extreme agony of spirit, he began a search for that Reality which was revealed only for a time to be so soon withdrawn. So great was his spiritual loneliness at this time, that he neglected his daily avocations, retired from the company of his friends, shunned his former pleasures and passed his days and nights in unutterable misery; so much so that even the "sun's rays," again to use his own language, "seemed to

pour down darkness and not light." One day while pacing up and down, in this state of extreme misery, he happened to notice a stray leaf of some book flying past him, carried forward by the wind. He picked it up and tried to read, but could not. It was written in the Sanskrit language, with which he was till then unacquainted. Those who knew better told him that "it was a portion of the Upanishads," and advised him to apply to Ram Chandra Vidyabagish of the Brahmo Samaj for an explanation. The application was made ; and to his great surprise he found that that single leaf contained a great message for him. It was the opening verse of the Ishopanishad, which says—"God is immanent in all things, in whatsoever lives and moves in the universe : enjoy, therefore, without being attached ; covet not wealth belonging to others."

From that day the course of his life was changed. He began to study Sanskrit that he might read those wonderful books, the *Upanishads*. This was in 1838. Along with the awakening of his soul, the influence of Raja Ram Mohun Roy, whom Devendra Nath had seen and admired in his boyhood, began to re-assert itself. As the eldest son of Dwarakanath Tagore, Devendra Nath was very much liked by Raja Ram Mohun Roy, whose house, as a boy, he often frequented,

when the far-famed reformer would not think it beneath his dignity to mix with the boys in their games. It is even said that the day before his departure for England, Ram Mohun Roy called at the house of Dwarakanath Tagore to say goodbye to his friend, and after bidding farewell to the assembled friends and associates, the Raja specially sent for young Devendra Nath, who was absent at the time, and took leave of him with the significant words, "I leave you as a successor to my *guddi*," that is—"my sacred office." All this, which was dormant till the day of Devendra Nath's conversion, rose with new power after that happy event and gave rise to a resolution in the heart of the young disciple to continue the work of reform commenced by Ram Mohun Roy.

As the first step after his conversion, he thought of starting a society for the dissemination of the precious truths which he found in the Upanishads. His first followers were some of his brothers and cousins and other young relatives of his. With these he proceeded to form a society for the investigation of religious truths.

In October 1839, along with these first followers, he established a society, which was at first called the *Tattwaranjini Sabha* but which subsequently took the name of *Tattwabodhini Sabha* or the Truth-teaching Society, a name suggested by

Pandit Ram Chandra Vidyabagish. Its objects, were, first, the dissemination of the knowledge of the Upanishads, secondly, the promotion of religious enquiry. The *Tatwabodhini Sabha* used to hold weekly and monthly meetings. Papers were read and discussed at the weekly meetings and divine service used to be held once a month. The *Sabha* commenced its career with only ten young men as its members. But so great were the energy and enthusiasm with which its proceedings were conducted that in the course of two years the number of members rose to 500, and in the course of a few years more, it attracted many rich and influential men into the ranks of its members and sympathisers, including, amongst others, Maharajadhiraj Mahtab Chund Bahadur of Burdwan, Raja Srish Chandra Roy of Nadia, Raja Satya Sharan Ghosal of Bhukailas and Babu Joy Krishna Mukerjee of Uttarpara, all well-known land-holders of Bengal. But the leading spirit, its life and soul, was, of course, Devendra Nath. Along with the development of his religious activities, his relationship with the Brahmo Samaj became closer. His accession to the Samaj brought a young co-adjutor to the almost broken-hearted old minister Pandit Ram Chandra Vidyabagish, who received him with open arms and was exceedingly rejoiced to find that the good seed planted by his revered master and

patron was about to take root in another truly pious soul. (Devendra Nath began to take active interest in the Brahmo Samaj from 1841, when the *Tattwabodhini Sabha* took charge of the pecuniary affairs of the Samaj and the Samaj took charge of the monthly service of the Sabha.) During the previous year something like a Theological College, called *Tatwabodhini Pathshala*, was started to train up a number of young men in the principles of the new faith. A youthful and enthusiastic scholar and writer, named Akshay Kumar Datta, was appointed a teacher of this institution. He subsequently took an important part in moulding the theology of the Samaj.)

It was not long before the spiritual genius of the young Devendra Nath discovered the moribund condition into which the Church had fallen. In attending the services of the Samaj, he found, as he himself mentions in his autobiography, that the doctrine of Rama's incarnation was being preached from the pulpit by Pandit Iswar Chandra Nyayaratna, the assistant of Pandit Ram Chandra Vidyabagish, and also that the old rule of excluding non-Brahmins from a side-room where the Vedas were being chanted was being adhered to. As his first act of reform, Devendra Nath entered his earnest protest against these practices and put an effectual check upon them.

But the decline of the Samaj was visible in other directions also. There was no fraternity of fellow-believers. Most of those who attended the services were idolators at home. There was no organisation, no constitution, no membership, no covenant, no pledge. Many from curiosity attended the services, specially when young Devendra Nath took part in them. Those who daily condemned idolatry and upheld the worship of God, were not required to discountenance idol-worship by their example or even to practise a habit of prayer. This appeared a sad deficiency to Devendra Nath. He proceeded to frame a covenant for the adoption of the Church and to introduce a regular form of Church service, including thanks-giving, praise and prayer, in the place of the old practice of mere expositions of passages from the Upanishads, attended with sermon and hymn. The exact wording of the covenant introduced at this time, I have not seen. The one that passes as the Adi Samaj Covenant * at present, is the second one which was framed after the great theological revolution of 1850. Suffice it to notice here that in this first covenant an attempt was made to keep as close as possible to the lines laid down by Ram Mohun Roy, and each devotee who accepted the new

* *Vide* Appendix B.

covenant had to declare that he would conform to the rules of religious life laid down by the Vedant. Another important feature of this first covenant was that it bound all who accepted it to worship God daily by the *Gayatri mantra*,* a well-known formula of spiritual meditation which is daily repeated by all classes of Brahmins in this country. Ram Mohun Roy had given a theistic interpretation of this formula and had enjoined upon his disciples the duty of conducting their daily devotion according to it. Accordingly, in framing his new covenant, Devendra Nath kept close to the lines laid down by the Raja. Having framed this covenant Devendra Nath influenced twenty of his youthful associates to join him in undergoing a formal ceremony of initiation at the hands of Pandit Ram Chandra Vidyabagish and to sign this new covenant. The 7th of Paus (B.E.) 1765 Shaka, corresponding to 1843, was the ever memorable day on which this first step was taken towards converting the Brahmo Samaj into a spiritual fraternity.

As the twenty-one young men, dressed in suitable attire befitting the sacred and solemn occasion, approached the old minister and repeated with reverential awe the solemn words of the Covenant, the feelings of old Vidyabagish over-

* *Vide* Appendix C.

powered him to such an extent that he sobbed like a child and could not preach the sermon he had intended to preach on the occasion, but only said—"O how I wish that Ram Mohun Roy were present this day".

With this formal initiation of a policy of constructive theism, the Church entered upon a new career of unusual activity. The Tattwabodhini Sabha supplied the place of a missionary organisation during this period. In quick succession one step after another was taken to preach the new principles far and wide; and so great was the enthusiasm created by the proceedings of the Samaj that the printing press, which a sympathiser of the Tattwabodhini Sabha had presented for the use of the Society was now utilized by Devendra Nath for the republication of many of the controversial works of Ram Mohun Roy, and also for printing a monthly journal called the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, which had been started from the month of Bhadra of that year, and had been placed under the editorial charge of Akshay Kumar Datta, the teacher of the Tattwabodhini Pathshala, who has since been known as one of the leading figures in Bengalee literature and whose splendid services to the cause of rational theology in the Brahmo Samaj I shall have occasion to notice hereafter.

The *Patrika*, first started with considerable

diffidence only for one year, soon became the principal organ of the Samaj for the propagation of its views, and rose to eminence as an epoch-making journal in a short time. It inaugurated the era of earnest journalism in Bengal, a thing unknown up to that time. In that it presented a marked and strong contrast to the prevailing tone of current journalism of that period, which was vulgar and personal. The *Patrika* taught men to think seriously and speak earnestly, supplied valuable information with regard to the development of religion in this country and materially promoted intellectual culture. Its achievement from a literary point of view was no less significant. It claimed amongst its contributors men like Dr. Rajendralala Mitra and Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. The articles of the latter on the Mahabharata were characteristic of the fine grace of style that we observe in his writings. Thus the journal was useful towards moulding the Bengali language and imparting nerve and vigour to it. In a few years it also began to publish an English translation of the Upanishads, for which purpose Devendra Nath engaged the services of Rajnarain Bose, the son of Nanda Kisore Bose, a disciple of Raja Ram Mohun Roy.

It may also be justly asserted that the *Patrika* showed the way in antiquarian research in

Bengal, before such a thing came into fashion even in Europe. It began to publish a translation of the Rig Veda from 1847. Even to the Sanskrit scholars of this province, early Sanskrit literature, such as the Vedas and the Upanishads, was almost unknown. They mostly confined themselves to the Smritis and the Darshanas. To them also the publication of these ancient books was a revelation.

Apart from ably conducting the *Patrika*, the Tattwabodhini Sabha also entered upon a career of propagandist activity. It employed the services of a number of preachers in the persons of Pandits Sridhar Nyayaratna, Brajanath Chatterjee, Lala Hazarilal, Krishnakamal Goswami and others, and in consequence, within a few years, many Samajes sprang up in provincial towns, such as Suksagar, Bansberia, Panihati, Midnapore, Rangpore, Dacca and Comilla.

Of these preachers, Lala Hazarilal, whose mysterious origin and equally mysterious disappearance furnish matter for interesting study, demands special notice. He had been picked up as a foundling by the grandfather of Devendra Nath Tagore near Brindaban, in the North-West, during one of his pilgrimages and was brought down to Calcutta, where he found shelter in the house of the Tagores. But as he grew up, he fell into evil company and contracted many of the

vices that were then prevalent in the city. Friendless and homeless, he trod the path to ruin undeterred in his course by any timely advice. Then came a great change. In the midst of his career of sin, the new life that dawned upon Devendra Nath affected Hazarilal also, who became the former's staunch disciple and co-adjutor and threw himself with ardour into the work of propagating the principles of the new Church. Principally as the result of his exertions, no less than 500 persons signed the form of membership of the *Tattwabodhini Sabha* as already referred to, and became its members within two years.

Lala Hazarilal was a man of original ideas and of peculiar habits. He threw himself into the work of the Samaj with great enthusiasm, and went on daily enlisting new members. His efforts for the propagation of the new faith were so successful that the number of those who signed the covenant of the Church rose to 767 in 1847, in which year he accompanied Devendra Nath to Benares, whither the latter went to supervise the education of the four students, mentioned below, and to make personal investigations into the teachings of the Vedas by holding conferences with Vedic scholars.

After the conferences were over, Hazarilal took leave of Devendra Nath and started on a pedestrian

journey to no one knew where. After this, he never communicated with his friends in Calcutta, devoted some 2 or 3 years to a wandering life, visiting Cawnpore, Agra, Lahore, Peshawar, Karachi and Bombay, finally settling down in Indore, his birth-place, and dying there in 1851. Wherever he went he preached the new doctrines and gained sympathisers.

(Besides the appointment of preachers, the *Tattwabodhini Sabha* had founded a school for the religious instruction of young men, called the Tattwabodhini Pathshala, as already noticed, which was transferred in 1844 to Bansberia, a village very close to Tribeni, a famous place of Hindu pilgrimage and a renowned seat of Sanskrit learning in Bengal at that time. For two years it had a prosperous career in its new abode, during which time it attracted much public notice ; but it had to be ultimately given up in 1846 in consequence of the sudden reverses of fortune that fell upon Devendra Nath after the death of his father in England.)

In connection with the Tattwabodhini Pathshala, a Sanskrit Professor had been engaged and a class had been opened for training a number of young men in the knowledge of the Upanishads ; but when the actual work of instruction commenced, it was soon found that a complete

knowledge of the Upanishads was unattainable without a previous general acquaintance with the contents and teachings of the Vedas. It was, therefore, decided to send the most capable of these students to Benares to study the Vedas. One student was accordingly sent to Benares by the Sabha in 1844. But latterly a controversy on the question of Vedic infallibility cropped up in the Samaj in 1845. Accordingly three more students were sent to that city with the aid of Babu Girish Chandra Dev, an earnest member of the Samaj. The names of these four students were Ananda Chandra, Tarak Nath, Baneswar and Ramanath. Of these Ananda Chandra subsequently came to be known as Pandit Ananda Chandra Vedantabagish, a well-known Sanskrit scholar, a preacher of the Samaj and the publisher of many important works.

It is also noteworthy that the mode of initiation into the new faith adopted by Devendra Nath at this time was strictly in accordance with the injunctions of the *Mahanirvan Tantra*. For instance, Brahmin candidates for initiation would be made to forego their *shikha* and *sutra*, i.e., their tuft of hair and their Brahmanical thread, which, of course, they used to put on again as soon as they returned to their homes. For some time there was the custom of bringing a *dhunuchi* or

vessel for burning incense, to the place of initiation and to light up a brisk fire to which the candidate had to consign his sacred thread, the odours of which were at times far otherwise than agreeable to the olfactory nerves of the congregation. The ceremony over, the initiated novice would be presented with a ring on which were inscribed the mystic phrase *aum tat sat* as a token of his new life and new relations. It is also said that following the injunctions of the *Mahanirvan Tantra*, Devendra Nath, in imitation of an orthodox rite, introduced the practice of giving *mantras*, or brief formulæ of worship sacred to the Deity, to intending disciples, only with this difference that he substituted Brahma *mantras* for idolatrous ones. There was at least one notable instance of such a ceremony. He had authorised Pandit Sridhar Nyayaratna to give *mantras* to the female members of the family of Babus Jagat Chandra Roy and Loke Nath Roy of Kanchrapara. The above practices, however, seem to have been dropped in course of time, for we find no mention of them after 1850.

In the meanwhile a great theological revolution in the principles of the Samaj was impending. In the year 1845 the orthodox Hindu community of Calcutta were thrown into feverish excitement by the conversion to Christianity of a Hindu lad,

named Umesh Chandra Sarkar, together with his young wife. The father of Umesh held an office in the Union Bank under the Tagores ; and the leading Hindus of the city were roused up by Devendra Nath, and all conjointly set on foot a movement in opposition to Dr. Alexander Duff's school, where Umesh was a student.

At a meeting of the leading Hindu citizens of Calcutta, called by Devendra Nath, as large a sum as 32,000 rupees was raised on the spot, Rs. 10,000 of which was contributed by Babu Ashutosh Dev, a millionaire of Calcutta, and a school called *Hindu Hitarthi Vidyalaya* was started, of which Devendra Nath Tagore and Hari Mohan Sen, an uncle of Keshub Chunder Sen, became the Secretaries. After a career of a few years this school ceased to exist, owing to the failure of the house of Ashutosh Dev, with whom the money was deposited.

The agitation with which the Brahmo leaders were so intimately connected naturally found vent through the columns of the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, which strongly criticised Dr. Duff's work on "India and Indian Missions," which appeared at the time. Dr. Duff retorted by vigorously assailing the principles of the Brahmo Samaj in the pages of the *Calcutta Review*. One of the points attacked by him was the infallibility

of the Vedas. To his charges the *Patrika* replied :—

“We will not deny that the reviewer is correct in remarking that we consider the Vedas and the Vedas alone, as the authorized rule of Hindu theology. They are the sole foundation of all our beliefs and the truths of all other Shastras must be judged of according to their agreement with them. What we consider as revelation is contained in the Vedas alone ; and the last part of our holy Scriptures treating of the final dispensation of Hinduism forms what is called Vedanta.”

In the conflict with the Christian Missionaries Devendra Nath, at this time, found a valuable co-adjutor in young Rajnarain Bose, who had then recently joined the Brahmo Samaj. The *Patrika* articles were from his pen and they were subsequently published in tract form under the title *Vedantism Vindicated*.

Thus it will be seen that in 1845 the Vedas were publicly proclaimed as the basis of the religion of the Brahmo Samaj and the religion of the Samaj was held up as Vedantism. As an outcome of the controversy with the Christians, great prominence was given to the doctrine of Vedic infallibility in the pages of the *Patrika* during the next two or three years, and the best arguments in its favour were adduced to silence doubtful critics.

Though, chiefly through the influence of Devendra Nath, the columns of the *Patrika* were

being thus used for the purpose of preaching the doctrine of Vedic infallibility, Akshay Kumar Datta, its editor, was ill at ease all the time in his new position, for his rationalistic nature found it difficult to reconcile itself to that doctrine. He began to discuss the matter privately with Devendra Nath and it was also evident that from the day of the public enunciation of the doctrine of Vedic infallibility, there had arisen a dissentient voice amongst the members of the Samaj itself, which required the best efforts of its leaders to reconcile them to the doctrine and silence their criticisms. This voice of dissent found vent in the pages of the *Patrika*, in the shape of letters of correspondents, but must have asserted itself quite strongly in internal circles also. Indeed, the period between 1846 and 1850 was a trying one to Devendra Nath in every way. On the one hand the death of his father in England involved him in new struggles, to be described afterwards, on the other, new questions for solution with new controversies arose in the body of the Samaj itself, needing careful handling, which taxed his sagacity to the utmost.

The *Patrika*, in which the voice of discontent found utterance, was, as far as can be ascertained, presided over at that time by an Editorial Board consisting of Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar,

Dr. Rajendralala Mitra, Babu Prasanna Kumar Sarvadhikari, subsequently the Principal of the Calcutta Sanskrit College, Babu Ananda Krishna Bose, a grandson of Raja Radhakanta Dev, the principal adversary of Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Babu Rajnarain Bose, and Pandit Ananda Chandra Vedantabagish, most of whom were personal friends of the editor, and perhaps shared his views on the subject of Vedic infallibility ; consequently the paper became the natural outlet for the growing discontent.

Devendra Nath was by nature conservative in his temperament. It was his mental habit to weigh things calmly, and not to lift his feet from the ground which they occupied without feeling quite sure of the ground lying before. Accordingly, when faced by the new problem, he took steps to inquire into the question of Vedic infallibility. And as one of those steps, as has been mentioned before, he sent in 1845 four Brahmin youths to Benares to study the four Vedas. They went and settled down there, earnestly addressing themselves to their study. In the meanwhile there went on interminable discussions on the question in the Calcutta circle of Brahmos. Akshay Kumar Datta was backed by a coterie of young men who held his views and at that time formed the advanced and rationalistic party of the Samaj.

Thus as the result of the controversy with the Christians a note of discord became audible within the Church itself and the visit of Devendra Nath to Benares in 1847, was partly due to a desire to form by personal investigation a correct idea about the teachings of the Vedas themselves.

The year 1846 brought serious reverses of fortune upon Devendra Nath. His father died in England that year, leaving behind him a large legacy of debts amounting to nearly a crore of rupees. These heavy debts, added to the unexpected death of his father, would have altogether crushed another man, less strong in his reliance upon God; but the young leader of the Brahmo Samaj came off victorious from the trial. The property his father had left was barely sufficient to cover less than half of his immense debts. Devendra Nath, in humble reliance upon God, at once made up his mind to make desperate effort to place his affairs on a morally satisfactory footing by coming to an understanding with his father's creditors. He made out a list of all the property left by his father and placed everything, including even those portions of his father's estates which the latter had set apart as trust property for the maintenance of his family, at the disposal of his creditors, who, moved by his courage and uprightness, desisted

from taking extreme measures, and, after a short period of trial, made a settlement with him, which he faithfully adhered to for many years, till every rupee of his father's debts had been paid off. It involved a strenuous struggle with comparative poverty, which Devendra Nath cheerfully bore for years. His moral heroism in embracing voluntary poverty and the subsequent cheerfulness with which he bore all privations produced a deep impression on Calcutta society, both Indian and European, and formed a brilliant and ever-memorable chapter of his career as a religious teacher. A part of the message he had received on the day of his conversion was, "Covet not wealth belonging to others." He remained true to that message throughout his long life, taking care never to run into debt, and scrupulously paying every farthing of his father's debts, so much so, that looking upon his father's promised donation of a lakh of rupees to the District Charitable Society, of which all hopes had been given up by the latter, as lawful debt, he paid it off, at a subsequent period, with interest.

His father's death brought another trial upon him. According to the custom of Hindu society, every son has a sacred duty to perform to the memory of a departed parent. It is to perform the ceremony of *Shraddha* or

memorial rites, in a fitting manner. The decorum of Hindu society is so very stringent on this point that the failure to properly perform this portion of a son's duty dooms him to everlasting social infamy. When the intelligence of the death of Dwarakanath Tagore reached Calcutta, the first thought of his friends and relations was to perform his *Shraddha* in a fitting manner. But here was a great test of the faith of Devendra Nath. The Hindu *Shraddha* ceremony includes idol-worship as a part of its programme. How could he worship an idol in the face of his Brahmo covenant? On the other hand not to perform the ceremony like a pious Hindu son, was to bring upon himself and his family deep disgrace. In this momentous trial also his fidelity to his convictions ultimately triumphed. He refused to take part in any idolatrous portion of the ceremony and only gave away the charities according to a non-idolatrous form of consecration which he had compiled from the Vedic writings for the occasion. This gave great offence to his friends and relations, who in a manner excommunicated him from that time.

The sudden reverses of fortune brought upon Devendra Nath other and more painful trials. The work of propagation of Brahmoism, upon which he had entered so enthusiastically and which was a source of great pleasure to him, also suffered

considerably through lack of funds. The Tatwabodhini Patshala of Bansberia was abolished ; its splendid house on the river Hugli was sold to Dr. Duff's Mission ; the four young Brahmins who had been sent to Benares in 1845 were recalled ; and the annual festivities on the 11th of Magh, the day of the public opening of the Brahmo Samaj by Ram Mohun Roy, which were introduced by himself since his formal connection with the Samaj, were greatly curtailed for the period during which his estates were under the management of his creditors.

Scarcely had he recovered from the shock of these two years, before he was called upon to face a very serious problem, the public renunciation of the doctrine of Vedic infallibility, which till then, as mentioned before, formed the basis of the religion of the Samaj. Doubts had arisen, as already stated, with regard to this part of their faith in the minds of the younger section of the Samaj, headed by Akshay Kumar Datta, from the date of the anti-Christian agitation of 1845 ; and these doubts were further confirmed by what the four Brahmins, educated at Benares, said with regard to the contents of the Vedas themselves. As soon, therefore, as the clouds that had gathered around the brow of the leader began to clear off, complaints became audible

and from 1847 the rationalistic party clamoured for the immediate repudiation of the doctrine of scriptural infallibility. Devendra Nath also, after a personal visit to Benares in 1847 to meet the Benares Pandits and after prolonged enquiries, began to entertain doubts as to the reasonableness of that doctrine. *

But from the time that he became conscious of the untenable character of the doctrine of Vedic infallibility he also became anxious to keep the movement as much as possible on the old lines of reverence for the ancient Hindu scriptures. Accordingly, he proceeded to make a compilation of judiciously selected passages from the Upanishads inculcating the truth of monotheism. These were published in the form of a book called *Brahma Dharma* or the Religion of the Worshipers of the One True God. He also laid down certain fundamental principles of Natural Theism called *Brahma Dharma Bija**, or Seed Principles of Brahmoism, for the acceptance of the members of the Samaj ; and framed a new covenant consistent with the principles of Natural and Universal Theism, in the place of the old Vedantic covenant. These efforts bear witness to his naturally sagacious and conservative instincts, which though surrendering all his conscience could no longer

* *Vide* Appendix D.

maintain, held fast to every thing that was precious as a legacy of the olden times. This work of reconstruction must be regarded as one of his greatest achievements. All this took place between the years 1847 and 1850. Babu Akshay Kumar Datta who was largely instrumental in bringing about this change, hailed it as a great advance in his annual address of 1851.

It may also be noted in this connection that, as a mark of the great change that had taken place on the subject of Vedic infallibility, a characteristic passage from the Upanishads, expressive of the fundamental principle of intuitive religion, began to be published at the head of the *Tatwabodhini Patrika* from this time, which goes on to say—“The *Rik Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda* and *Atharva Veda* and *Siksha*, *Kalpa*, *Vyakaran*, *Nirukta*, *Chhandas* and *Jyotish*, are inferior; that is truly superior which enables a man to attain to the Eternal and Immutable Being.”

The anniversary festival of 1850, which came off after these internal conflicts and final settlement, was celebrated with great enthusiasm. A special cause for this new fervour was the addition of the third story, with its beautiful marble *vedi* (pulpit), to the Samaj building. In a new chapel, with new music, the new covenant and a new form of service, Devendra Nath cele-

brated the anniversary with great refreshment to his spirit. This anniversary is also memorable for another important fact. It was from this year that a new stimulus to the spiritual life of the Samaj was given chiefly through the instrumentality of Raj Narain Bose. Up to that time that life was too much intellectual and theological and too little devotional. For some time before this Raj Narain Bose had been pointing out this defect to Devendra Nath, who consented to read on this occasion a prayer of Fenelon, the celebrated Archbishop of Cambray in France, as a help towards the Religion of Love, which was a passion with the French Archbishop. Raj Narain Bose translated the prayer for Devendra Nath. It wonderfully moved the congregation and introduced a new element of devotional fervour in the services of the Samaj.

The period between 1850 and 1856 may be regarded as the transition period of old Brahmoism. With the renunciation of the doctrine of scriptural infallibility there arose a tendency amongst the younger members of the Samaj, headed by Akshay Kumar Datta, not only to broaden the basis of Brahmoism by advocating new social ideals but also to apply the dry light of reason even to the fundamental articles of religious belief. The new spirit began to manifest itself in the columns of the *Tatwabodhini Patrika*,

where articles began to appear advocating female education, supporting widow-remarriage, crying down intemperance, denouncing polygamy, trying to rationalise Brahmo doctrines, and seeking to conduct the affairs of the Church on strictly constitutional principles. The views of Devendra Nath on social questions were not quite in harmony with those of the younger party and his mind was consequently very much exercised during this period by the difficulties he experienced in keeping his followers well in hand. But with his habitual caution and prudence he tried to steer the vessel of the Samaj judiciously avoiding the quicksands before it. He encouraged all legitimate aspirations of the younger party, by leaving room for their expression and in some cases encouraging them by his personal countenance. He left the direction of the policy of the *Tatwabodhini Patrika* in the hands of its able editor and of the remnants of an old editorial Board, consisting at one time of the distinguished men mentioned before, devoting himself mainly to the spiritual and devotional work of the Samaj.

A noteworthy feature of this period was the establishment of many Samajes in and near Calcutta. Chiefly through Devendra Nath's own influence and exertions Samajes were established

at such places as Behala, Kidderpore, Bhawanipore, in the southern suburbs, and at Burdwan, Krishnagore, &c., amongst provincial towns. At Behala and Bhawanipore the young members of the Samajes started two societies for the propagation of Brahmoism in their respective localities; whilst at Burdwan the local Raja, Maharajadhiraj Mahtab Chund Bahadur, began to manifest unusual interest in the Brahmo Samaj movement, placed himself in friendly relationship with Devendra Nath and established a Samaj within the precincts of the palace itself, with the aid of three learned Pandits as its ministers. Devendra Nath threw himself earnestly into this work of propagation and encouraged the struggling bodies with his presence and cheering words.

But in the central seat of the Calcutta Samaj itself, he was rather in conflict with the party of Akshay Kumar Datta, who towards the end of this period started a society called *Atmiya Sabha* or Society of Friends, (properly speaking a revival of Ram Mohun Roy's famous institution), which though originally established for the 'discussion of social questions, ultimately took up for discussion even the fundamental articles of faith adopted by the Samaj; so much so that the members proposed to settle their belief in the attributes of God by counting votes, as will be

witnessed by the following extract from Devendra Nath's Autobiography :—" Akshay Kumar Datta started a Friends' Society, in which the nature of God was decided upon by show of hands. For instance, somebody asked, ' Is God the personification of bliss or not ? ' Those who believed in his blissfulness held up their hands. Thus the truth or otherwise of God's attributes was decided by a majority of votes." Such proceedings naturally shocked Devendra Nath a good deal ; and that was one of the reasons, as he himself alleges in his Autobiography, of his retiring to the Simla hills, where he hoped to be able to give himself up entirely to study, thought, meditation and prayer and to the close examination of the new bearings that had naturally arisen around the faith of the Brahmo Samaj in consequence of the surrender of the doctrine of scriptural infallibility.

On the eve of Devendra Nath's departure for the hills, and in the midst of his varied activities Akshay Kumar Datta was struck down in 1855 by a terrible malady that affected his brains and made him incapable of carrying on his intellectual pursuits. He was obliged to give up the editorship of the *Tatwabodhini Patrika*, which was placed under the charge of another member named Nabin Chandra Banerjee. It was a sudden blow from which Akshay Kumar never recovered in his life ;

and soon after he had to retire from all work in connection with the Brahmo Samaj.

The retirement of Akahay Kumar Datta, however, did not altogether allay the rationalistic agitation. Many of the younger members of the Friends' Society remained in the field and went on ventilating questions of reform and finally withdrew themselves from the Samaj, some years later, to form a separate Samaj of their own, as will be noticed hereafter. Fortunately this did not lead to a regular schism ; for their existence as a dissentient body was soon engulfed by the great schism of 1866. to be described hereafter.

Worn out by domestic troubles and the internal conflicts of the Church, Devendra Nath retired to the hills in 1856. During his absence a meeting of the old members of the Samaj was held in which Devendra Nath and Rama Prasad Roy, the second son of Ram Mohun Roy, were appointed trustees of the Samaj to fill up two vacancies caused by death. Thus the affairs of the Samaj were placed in safe hands in the face of an impending struggle.

During his residence on the hills, Devendra Nath chiefly occupied himself with prayer and meditation, and a close study of the works of such modern European thinkers as Kant, Fichte, Victor Cousin, &c., as well as of various writings

of Hindu theologians and of the Persian poet Hafiz. He tried to master the new position that had arisen out of his action in discarding the Vedas as infallible authority. As the result of his studies he was convinced of the broad universal basis of natural theism, and came to the conclusion that it was religion that explains the scriptures and not the scriptures religion.

On his return from the hills in 1858, Devendra Nath was exceedingly glad to find that a young man of genius and ability, belonging to another influential family of the town of Calcutta, of whom he had already heard, had joined the Samaj during his absence. This was Keshub Chunder Sen, "the son of Peary Mohun Sen, Devendranath's former class-fellow in the Hindu College. Keshub was then in his twentieth year, having been born in 1838. His family belonged to the sect of *Vaishnavas*. Peary Mohun Sen, the father of Keshub Chunder Sen, though not known to fame like his father Ram Kamal Sen, (the friend and fellow-labourer of Dr. H. H. Wilson in Bengal) is reputed to have been a devout follower of his ancestral faith. Those who saw him in life still remember him as a man of uncommon comeliness of person, mildness of manners, exceptional purity of life, detached and unworldly in his

disposition, his nose and forehead bearing the well-known marks of *Vaishnava* devotion. Keshub's mother too, lately dead, was a lady remarkable for great piety and liberality. She stood by her illustrious son through all the vicissitudes of his life. Born and bred in a house so actively religious and under parents so eminently pious, Keshub Chunder Sen was surrounded by religious influences from his cradle. He was carefully kept aloof from the contaminating influences of evil company, and grew up to be a noble youth with well-directed moral and spiritual aims. As a boy he was full of fun and play, taking the lead in all the games of his companions, inventing new modes of entertainment, showing magic lantern performances and getting up amateur theatricals. From an early period of his life he showed an aptitude for influencing other minds. Even so early as 1585, when he was a mere strippling, Keshub Chunder Sen began to manifest great interest in the moral instruction of the young, and was associated with older persons in founding a society called "The British India Society", in which men like the Rev. Mr. James Long and the Rev. Mr. Dall, the Unitarian missionary, took part. In this he was greatly encouraged by his elder brother, Babu Nabin Chandra Sen. As a part of the work of this Society, an Evening School was opened in

his own house in 1855, where he used to get together a number of younger boys and to help them in their daily lessons, whereby he hoped to gain an opportunity for imparting to them moral instruction.

Then, all of a sudden, in a moment of regrettable thoughtlessness, there happened an unfortunate incident which cast a gloom over his nature for a long time. Let me relate this incident in the words of his biographer, the Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar :—

“When going through the Senior Scholarship Examination in 1856, now corresponding to the First Arts, a most unnatural accident befell him, which cast a gloom upon the remaining years of his college life. On the day when the Mathematical questions were set, one of the professors, who was appointed to watch the examinees, found him comparing papers with the young man who sat next to him. It is difficult to say with whom the irregularity originated, whether with Keshub or his neighbour, but he was most severely handled for it. He was not permitted to appear at the rest of the examination; they threatened to rusticate him; but on urgent and influential remonstrance took him back again. His sensitiveness, naturally great, was most deeply offended, the whole circumstance depressed him most seriously, and affected his mental development ever afterwards.”

Further testimony to this incident is borne by Rai Bahadur Norendranath Sen, the editor of the *Indian Mirror* and a cousin of Keshub Chunder.

In a short biographical sketch of his cousin, the Rai Bahadur says :—

“ What actually happened was this : when Keshub was sitting for the examination, one of the boys near him spoke to him. Keshub, who was naturally polite and affable, replied to his fellow-student, with the result, that *both of them were sent out of the examination hall.** He described the incident to me on his return home, and from what I heard I did not think he was to blame. The statement that this incident had an effect on Keshub in turning him to prayer and meditation has been introduced apparently to embellish the story. As a matter of fact Keshub from his childhood was of a religious and meditative disposition.”

What actually happened in the Examination hall is not the question here ; that he was expelled from it is certain. That public disgrace was naturally followed by a period of mental depression, as will be manifest from the following words from his own sermons called the *Jivan Ved*, as translated by the Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar, his friend and biographer. In a sermon on *Habitation in the Wilderness*, Mr. Sen says :

“ All those books and those friends who were likely to make me smile, I avoided. Gradually I became silent and spoke very little. The place in which I lived, and the room where I sat I regarded as a charnel house. The noise which the inmates made was to me like the howl of wild beasts and every scene of wickedness was like the play-ground of death. True I did not retire into any wilderness, but the world was a wilderness to me. I did not

* The italics are mine.

weep but lived on without a smile. Thus I rose from bed in the morning and thus I retired to bed at night. Who was my chief friend then? He among the English poets who could best describe this melancholy. I used to read Young's "*Night Thoughts*." If any book gave me pleasure it was that. I occupied myself with those things which put a painful pressure on the mind and keep away from evil and make it serious. All this took place when I was about 18, 19, or 20. I had married. My wife was coming to live with me. I was about to enter the world. Here was the prospect of danger. I thought thus:—

"My soul is a noble thing. Shall I subject it to the wife? Shall I subject it to the world? I resolved never to be over-fond of wife or of the world, because I knew that to be the cause of death to many. Thus the foundation of my life was laid in asceticism."

In his lecture on "Am I an inspired Prophet"—he further declares:—

"I entered the world with ascetic ideas; and my honey-moon was spent amid austerities in the house of the Lord."

When it is remembered that Mr. Sen's marriage took place in that very year, the year 1856, when he was eighteen, as he declares in his sermon, having been born in 1838, and also that he joined the Brahmo Samaj in 1857, as will be noticed hereafter, we may reasonably conclude that, that unhappy incident brought a great change in his life. It drove him to earnest self-examination, and gave rise to a solemn resolve to mend his whole life and conduct. That a little incident like that gave a new turn to his whole life shows the metal of which Keshub Chunder Sen was made.

After this he took to the study of mental and moral philosophy and as his nature gained in introspection he began to develop quite a new set of convictions. One of these was the necessity of prayer as a means of spiritual illumination and sustenance. In the loneliness of his soul he was driven to take shelter in earnest prayer. He practised it himself and influenced others to adopt the same course. He commenced an earnest study of such writers as Dr. Chalmers and Theodore Parker. In 1857 he established in his own house a society called the "Good Will Fraternity," where he read passages from Dr. Chalmers and Theodore Parker, and himself delivered impassioned discourses on moral and religious subjects. Devendra Nath Tagore, after his return from the hills, was apprised of the existence and working of this society by his second son, Satyendra Nath, who had been a fellow-student of Keshub Chunder Sen in the Hindu College. At the request of Mr. Sen, Devendra Nath presided at one of the meetings of the society. Into the ranks of its workers Mr. Sen drew many of his early associates of the Evening School.

Mr. Sen joined the Brahmo Samaj in 1857, during the absence of Devendra Nath, by privately signing the Brahmo Samaj covenant. It happened in the following manner. While developing

his new religious convictions, one of Rajnarain Bose's tracts called "What is Brahmoism?" fell into his hands. He was struck by the similarity of its principles with his newly formed convictions and at once decided to join the Brahmo Samaj. When Devendra Nath returned from the hills he gave Keshub a warm welcome, and received him into his fold, and an attachment sprang up between them, the like of which has seldom been seen. Keshub became the trusted counsellor of the old leader in all Samaj affairs, and the combination of the two became a source of new strength to the Church.

From this time the Samaj entered upon a new career of spiritual activity and practical usefulness, which may be justly regarded as its third great revival. Devendra Nath with fervent devotion and Keshub Chunder with his youthful activity formed a happy union which was productive of the most brilliant results. Hundreds began to flock to the services of the Samaj to listen to the fervid and inspired utterances of the old leader, every word of which made them feel that God was near. The lives of many were changed. Many who had gone far in the path of sin repented, and gave up their old ways. Those who were present at these services can never forget the deep ferment that those utterances caused in their

hearts. The number of candidates for initiation into the new faith increased every week. It was noised abroad that the Brahmo Samaj was developing a new life. Its annual meetings began to attract unusually large crowds. Its new hymns, mostly composed by Satyendra Nath Tagore, the second son of Devendra Nath, became a subject of talk of the whole town ; the new inspiration that was in them was something very charming. Men were unfamiliar with such expressions of rapturous joy and devout hope, in connection with things which they were in the habit of regarding as unseen and intangible. I translate a few hymns, chosen at random, composed during the period of the second revival, which will communicate to the reader some idea of the deeply spiritual character of that revival :—

(1)

“ Oh ! Thou incomparable light of lights ! the sun, moon, planets and stars are devoid of lustre before thee.

As a single sun, with myriads of rays, lights up the whole world, so thy love scattered in a thousand ways, wells up in the pure love of woman, and also lives in the maternal heart.

The high peak that pierces the clouds, or the deep blue sea, whithersoever we go, thou art there. The bright effulgence of the sun is a ray from

thee, and thy shining is in the moon, and thy mild loveliness is in the clouds; whether in crowded cities or in the lonely forest, wherever we roam, thou art there."

(2)

"I stand as a beggar for Thy grace.

As rivers flow naturally towards the sea, and as naturally the flowers give their scent, so my soul naturally yearns after thee; so does it naturally fasten its love on thee. It is sin alone that throws me into darkness.

The same sun shines on the huts of the poor as on the palaces of the rich; thus also is thy grace, O Lord, world-embracing and universal; and thy gates are open day and night for all."

(3)

"O thou, the Lord of the lowly heart, do thou pour the nectar of thy love into this heart of mine.

It will bring peace and gladness to my sin-burnt spirit.

The waters of thy love make the withered tree to bloom, and it sets flowing living fountains in the barren and rocky tracts of life.

Knowing that thy love gives salvation and eternal life, I pray for a drop of those waters for my sorrow-stricken soul.

With the aid of that love, Oh Thou greatest of

friends, I shall rise above worldiness and shall cut through the snares of temptations and shall find rest for my soul."

Let the reader compare these hymns with the hymns of Ram Mohun Roy, and he will at once find for himself the characteristic difference between the missions of the two men. Ram Mohun Roy called his countrymen to the contemplation of God as Truth, Devendra Nath taught them how to hold communion with Him in love and in spirit.

But what was young Keshub doing in the meantime? He was already the centre of a party of young men, whom the revival had drawn into the fold and whose number daily increased. Every day was a day of new experience with them; every thought a new revelation. Many of them were distinguished students of the University, and several had just commenced life. By similarity of age, education and aspirations, they were closely united with one another. A new spirit seized all of them, their enthusiasm knew no bounds, and they longed to give themselves for the service of God and man.

The re-awakened interest in the proceedings of the Samaj was visible from 1858, *i.e.*, from the time of the return of Devendra Nath from the hills. From that year the rule to hold an annual meeting of all the members of the Samaj for

considering the annual report of the progress of the Church, and also to appoint office-bearers, was introduced.

At that time the affairs of the Samaj were being still managed by the old Tatwabodhini Sabha, of which the majority of the managing council consisted of the older members, among whom were some prominent disciples of Akshay Kumar Datta, and no less a person than the well-known Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was the Secretary.

In 1859 the Tatwabodhini Sabha was abolished and the propagatory part of its work was taken in hand by the Brahmo Samaj; the printing press, the library and the other properties of the Sabha were made over to the trustees of the same. Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, who did not agree with Devendra Nath about the changes introduced, resigned the secretaryship of the Sabha and retired altogether from Brahmo Samaj work. In his place Devendra Nath and Keshub Chunder became Joint Secretaries of the Samaj.

In the midst of his new ideas and aspirations Keshub Chunder Sen got up, with the aid of his young friends and associates of the Evening School and the Goodwill Fraternity, including his subsequent biographer, Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar, the performance of a sensational drama, called *Bidhaba-*

bibaha or the Re-marriage of Widows, published at the time and written in defence of that reform by Umesh Chunder Mitra of Bhowanipore in the southern suburbs of Calcutta. Mr. Sen was the manager and his friends were the actors. But that was only a temporary diversion ; for Mr. Sen soon became absorbed in earnest Brahmo Samaj work.

On the 24th of April of that year, a new institution called the " Brahmo School ", was started, where a series of weekly lectures on Brahmo theology, in Bengali and English alternately, were arranged to be delivered. Devendra Nath Tagore, aided by Pandit Ajodyanath Pakrashi, an able preacher of the Samaj, took charge of the Bengali lectures, and Mr. Sen of the English ones. These weekly lectures attracted many college students and caused a new ferment in the minds of the rising generation. The Brahmo School became so popular amongst the rising generation that something like a branch of it was established within a few years at Bhowanipore, in the southern suburbs of Calcutta, where Devendra Nath and Ayodhyanath Pakrashi delivered regular lectures in Bengali, attracting a number of young men, many of whom have subsequently joined the Brahmo Samaj, and where Mr. Sen delivered one of his celebrated lectures on the "Destiny of Human Life".

On the 27th of September of 1859, Devendra Nath, accompanied by Mr. Sen and his second son, Satyendra Nath, sailed for Ceylon. This trip furnished a rare opportunity to Mr. Sen to cultivate the friendship of the old leader, which knit them together more closely than ever. Upon their return, Mr. Sen was persuaded by his guardians to accept a clerkship in the Bank of Bengal. He was in that post till July, 1861. The influence of the Kolutola Sen family in the Bengal Bank, since the days of his grandfather Ram Kamal Sen, was in the ascendant and Keshub Chunder Sen's way to future worldly prosperity was open and assured. But his heart was not in that kind of occupation. The same Providence that had led his steps into the Brahmo Samaj was leading him on to consecrate his energies to its mission. Whilst employed in the Bank, he was preparing himself for his life-work by earnest study, for which purpose he frequently visited the Calcutta Public Library and spent long hours there. He also devoted his leisure hours to the preparation of his Brahmo School lectures.

In the beginning of 1860, Mr. Sen visited Krishnagar, the celebrated capital of the Raja of Nadia, and, after Calcutta, one of the principal seats of education and intelligence in the province. Here his lectures roused up

a Christian adversary in the person of the Rev. Mr. Dyson, who is chiefly remembered in connection with this period of the history of the Brahmo Samaj as having originated that prolonged controversy with the Christian missionaries of Bengal, in which the late Rev. Lal Behari Dey, well-known as a writer and critic of more than ordinary ability, figured so prominently and which closed with Mr. Sen's celebrated lecture, "The Brahmo Samaj Vindicated," delivered in 1863, and with Dr. Alexander Duff's subsequent departure from this country.

Soon after his return from Krishnagar, from June 1860, Mr. Sen began to publish a series of tracts which may be justly regarded as the first trumpet-call of new Brahmoism; the first tract commenced with the title "Young Bengal, this is for you"; the second was "Be prayerful"; the third on "The religion of love"; the fourth on "The Basis of Brahmoism"; the fifth "Brethren, love your Father." Thus one after another altogether twelve tracts were issued, some of them dealing with such fundamental questions of faith, as intuition as the basis of religious life, revelation, atonement and salvation. These tracts were continued till the middle of 1861 when Mr. Sen retired from his secular employment and was engrossed in the constructive work of the Samaj. Mr. Sen's Brahmo

School lectures together with these tracts at once made him known to the rising generation of young students and marked him out as the leader of Young Bengal. Large numbers of young men from the colleges began to flock to his lectures and many enrolled themselves as regular students of the Brahmo School and a pretty large number subsequently joined the Brahmo Samaj.

The second important event of this period was the establishment of the *Sangat Sabha*, a society of fellow-believers, partly resembling the class-meetings of the Methodists, whose object it was to promote mutual spiritual intercourse amongst its members. It arose in this way :—On one occasion a party of Brahmos, including the two leaders, had gone to a retreat in the garden-house of Babus Joy Gopal Sen and Baikunta Nath Sen, members of the Samaj. The gathering was so spiritually effective that great enthusiasm seized every soul present, till at last they marched out in procession singing through the streets, in which the late Babu Haradev Chatterji, the father-in-law of two of Devendra Nath's sons, took the lead. This may justly be regarded as the first street procession of the Brahmo Samaj. It was also resolved at this meeting to start small societies, in different parts of the town, for mutual spiritual intercourse, to which Devendra Nath gave the name of *Sangat*

Sabhas in imitation of similar societies amongst the Sikhs of the Punjab. Two or three *sangats* seem to have been established at this time in different parts of the town. But with the exception of the one sitting once a week at the house of Keshub Chunder Sen at Kolutolah, the rest were discontinued within a short time. Of the Kolutolah *Sangat*, Mr. Sen was the presiding genius ; and here also he was surrounded by his early associates of the Evening School and of the Good-Will Fraternity. Many young men who had been drawn into the movement through his lectures also became regular attendants at its sittings. The *Sangat Sabha* may be truly said to have been the seed-plot of New Brahmoism. The old school of Brahmos, with a few exceptions, conformed to the idolatrous practices of orthodox Hindu society at home, confining their Brahmoism to a mere intellectual assent to the preachings of the Samaj. But the young men under the influence of their young leader daily imbibed a new inspiration from Western sources. During this period Mr. Sen cultivated the private friendship of some Christian missionaries, and under his guidance the members of the *Sangat* made a careful study of the Bible and of the works of Theodore Parker, Prof. Newman and Miss Cobbe. Their Christian studies developed in their lives the Christian spirit

of repentance and prayer and they formed a solemn resolve to reduce their new convictions to practice. The influence that the *Sangat* exercised on the minds of the young men was something indescribable. Its members assembled at its meetings from the farthest ends of the town. No frowns of relatives, no inclemencies of weather, no obstacles of any kind could prevent them from gathering together. And how did they spend their time when assembled ? They sat deliberating upon important questions of moral and religious conduct with an earnest resolve to reduce their decisions to practice. It often so happened that these meetings were continued far into the night ; and while returning home, the members would at times form little groups below the gas-posts in the streets carrying on further conversation, forgetful of the time, till an early hour of the morning—so great was their absorption !

They daily imbibed new inspiration from their new studies, read with avidity letters from such Western thinkers as Prof. F. W. Newman, discussed important points of philosophy, as laid down by Sir W. Hamilton and Victor Cousin, the two philosophical writers who most influenced them at this period, and often separated at the end of their friendly gatherings with redoubled resolutions to lay down their lives at the altar of

their new faith. At the meetings of the *Sangat* they decided to give up caste, to discard the sacred Brahmanical thread, to accept no invitation to any idolatrous festival, to give no countenance to the dancing of public women, to practise temperance, to give their wives and sisters the advantages of the light they had themselves received and to be strictly truthful, honest and just in all their dealings with their fellow-men. They were so far faithful in carrying out their convictions that they began to use the expressions "*Bodh hay*" (I think) and "*Chesta karbo*" (I will try) in making their assertions and promises, lest they should say something that was not strictly true or fail to do something which they had bound themselves to perform. Like the nasal twang of the English Puritans and the "thee" and "thou" of the Quakers in England, these expressions also became subjects of ridicule to the Calcutta public.

The following hymns, chosen off-hand from amongst a considerable number composed during that period of spiritual upheaval, will convey some idea of the spirit of repentance and prayer that was awakened in the minds of the younger section of the Samaj by their Christian studies.

(1)

"Where art Thou, O Friend of the poor and

lowly, reveal thyself and save me from the sufferings of sin.

I am a miserable sinner ; I know not how to call upon thee.

If thou, out of thy great mercy, but once come to the abode of my heart, I may behold thee then to my heart's content, and then would be satisfied my longing of many days.

My mind is restless, do thou reveal thyself, O Father, none else knoweth the longing of my heart."

(2)

"How long shall I mourn and cry, O Thou who art love itself.

Thou art the treasure of the poor and the helpless, hence I call upon thee ; what other hope of redress is there in this world for the poor and needy ? Keep, keep him, O Father, lo ! cries here thy sinful child.

Oh ! forsake me not for my sins, O Lord ; in the shade of thy feet I long to soothe my aching heart ; I fly to thy shelter, Saviour of sinners, save me, O thou merciful One."

(3)

"O Thou great fountain of mercy, have mercy on this poor and sinful being. Oh, how can I behold thee with this heart of mine so hardened by sin. I know this much alone that sinners are

saved by thy grace. My hope rests on this, that thou art Father and Mother even to the sinner."

(4)

"Who else is there O Lord to show his mercy to the sinner? In whatever direction I look, it is all darkness.

I know no one in the world, who can give to me the thing for which my soul cries. O Lord! thou art the refuge of those who have no other shelter. Oh! bring redress to thy servant.

Oh! how long shall I wait like this? Shall I go on longing and hoping for ever? Oh, how can I bear the burden of this life, my days are too heavy to bear.

My soul is weary; day and night the burden of my sin is too heavy to bear; Oh, look on me with thy kind and propitious eyes, otherwise there is no hope of redress.

To whom can I open the sorrows of my heart? Where else can I find one so sympathetic with my joys and sorrows? Thou alone knowest the inmost agonies of the spirit; hence I call upon thee again and again."

What a contrast do we find in these hymns to the joy of communion and the sense of the pervading presence of the Deity that we find in the hymns of the second great revival. The sense of sin is not altogether absent there; but the sense of joyful

repose is predominant. That was the spirit of Devendra Nath. Keshub Chunder opened his heart to the Christian spirit and it begat a sense of sin and the spirit of earnest prayer of which the above hymns are an indication.

The noble impulses generated at the meetings of the *Sangat* were fanned into a flame, week after week, by the impassioned utterances of the revered old leader. The eagerness to work and to suffer for the cause became a ruling passion with the young members of the Samaj, the foremost amongst whom, following the example of Keshub Chunder Sen, threw up their secular employments and in a true apostolical spirit adopted the missionary life during the course of the next three or four years, in the face of great privations. Thus the first nucleus of a missionary organisation was formed.

In the beginning of 1861, the attention of the members of the Samaj was called to the great sufferings of large masses of people in the North-Western Provinces on account of a famine that was raging there for some months. Under the leadership of Devendra Nath and Keshub Chunder a special service was held for raising funds in aid of the sufferers. The service called forth a ready and generous response from the public. The attendance was large, and so great was the generous

enthusiasm created by the service that many parted then and there with everything precious they had on their persons (such as watches, rings, chains, &c.) to swell up the amount of the contributions of the Samaj. This gave a new philanthropic turn to the energies of the younger party, and next December we find them organising a regular Epidemic Fund for the relief of the sufferers from epidemic fever, which seems to have made its first appearance in Bengal at this time.

On the 26th of July of that year, the marriage of Sukumari, the second daughter of Devendra Nath, was celebrated according to the reformed rites of the Brahmo Samaj. Properly speaking, this was the first step taken by the two Brahmo leaders conjointly in the direction of practical social reform. This was the consummation of Devendra Nath's previous acts in organizing a community of fellow-believers by the introduction of the Theistic Covenant. In framing the marriage ritual, Devendra Nath, in pursuance of his well-known conservative instincts, kept as close as possible to the ritual followed in orthodox Hindu marriages, excluding therefrom the idolatrous portions. This marriage greatly stimulated the reforming proclivities of the younger men of the *Sangat*, who hailed it as a great step in the direction of social reform; and hence-forward, the Brahmo Samaj

began to be looked upon by the public as a reforming body.

The next step that the two leaders took conjointly was the starting of the *Indian Mirror*, long known as the organ of Mr. Sen's party, but which has latterly passed into the hands of Rai Bahadur Narendra Nath Sen, his cousin, and is at present principally a political journal. The *Mirror* was started as a fortnightly journal from the month of August of that year. Devendra Nath supplied the funds, and the services of Mr. Manomohan Ghose, a well-known barrister in subsequent years, and of Captain Palmer, a dilapidated old soldier, were also retained in the editorial staff as regular contributors. As the *Tatwabodhini Patrika* was the Bengali organ of the Samaj, so the *Indian Mirror* became its English organ. Mr. Sen evidently started the idea, but the initial funds were supplied by Devendra Nath, the former undertaking the duties of the managing Editor.

Towards the end of that year, the younger party headed by Mr. Sen began to agitate an important question, namely, the educational mission of the Brahmo Samaj. A special meeting of the members of the Samaj was held on the 3rd of October, to consider the best means of promoting education in this country. Mr. Sen, who had begun to take an earnest interest

in that question, addressed this meeting and made a passionate appeal to the members present to make education an important part of the work of the Samaj. It was also decided at this meeting to make an appeal to the British public in that connection. A tract called an "Appeal to the British Nation for the Promotion of Education in India" was accordingly published and was circulated in England through Prof. F. W. Newman, with whom correspondence was opened from this time. Prof. Newman threw himself with great earnestness into this work, and with the aid of Babu Rakhal Das Halder, an enthusiastic member of the Brahmo Samaj, who was then residing in England as a student, tried to rouse the interest of the British public in the educational project. He sought the assistance of several eminent retired Anglo-Indian officials like Sir Charles Trevelyan, many of whom, however, turned a cold shoulder to the project and the English agitation seems to have fallen through.

This year (1861) is also memorable for the publication of a remarkable book called the *Brahmo Dharma Anusthan*, or "The Practice of Brahmoism" in the columns of the *Patrika*. The book was an epoch-making one in the history of the Samaj. It contained the substance of some of the discussions held at the meetings of the *Sangat Sabha* compiled

and recast by Keshub Chunder Sen himself. When subsequently published in a book form it produced a profound impression ; so much so that, when Devendra Nath went through it he was deeply stirred, and, it is said that, as a mark of his sympathy with the new principles, discarded his Brahminical thread. From this time he seems to have also banished from his house all idolatrous practices, such as the Durga Puja festival, which he had previously permitted in consideration of the earnest wishes of his brothers, who were by this time dead ; and from this time also he converted the Durgapuja Hall in his house into a domestic chapel for the daily worship of the One True God.

From this year (1861) also, as already stated, a new zeal for the propagation of Brahmoism took possession of the souls of the youthful members of the *Sangat*. Mr. Sen resigned his post in the Bengal Bank to be able to devote all his time to the work of the Samaj. His example was followed within the course of the next two or three years by some of his friends, notably by Bijay Krishna Goswami, a young man of Santipore, one of the great centres of popular *Vaishnavism*, who was a student of the Medical College at that time. Bijay Krishna gave up his college studies and threw himself with great enthusiasm into the work of propagation. We find him visiting

Dacca within a short time where his impassioned utterances gave rise to a great agitation, and roused up the old defenders of Hinduism into activity.

The example of Bijay Krishna brought into the field other workers, amongst whom may be mentioned Babus Annada Prasad Chatterji, Umanath Gupta, Aghorenath Gupta, Mohendra Nath Bose, and Jadunath Chakraverti. These were the first apostles of New Brahmoism, who took up its banner in the midst of bitter persecutions and great privations. Many more have subsequently joined the apostolical body ; but all honor belongs to these early pioneers whose devotion and self-sacrifice showed the way. They carried the light of Brahmoism to the furthest parts of the country and it can be safely asserted that but for them Brahmoism could not have been that power which it became under Keshub Chunder Sen.

The year 1862 brought with it increase of strength to the younger party. On the 13th of April and 1st of Bysak according to B. E., Mr. Sen was elevated to the post of the *Acharyya* or minister of the Samaj by Devendra Nath, who from this time began to be called the *Pradhan Acharyya* or the chief minister. The question had long been in the latter's mind and it was whilst living in retirement in a mango-grove at Gushkara in the Burdwan district, that the voice

came to him to appoint Keshub a minister of the Samaj, and he returned to Calcutta with the resolution of carrying out that injunction. Mr. Sen, no less than many others, was taken by surprise at this proposal. Many older members murmured at it, but Devendra Nath remained firm. In due time there appeared an advertisement in the *Tatwabodhini Patrika* announcing the approaching ceremony, and preparations were set on foot to make it a solemn one. On the appointed day after the usual divine service, Devendra Nath said—"On this day by the command of Almighty God, I do appoint Keshub Chunder Sen, a minister of the Brahmo Samaj." Then he presented to the latter a copy of the book called the "Brahmo Dharma," with a formal appointment letter conferring on him the title of Brahmananda,—meaning one whose delight is in God.

The elevation of Mr. Sen to the pulpit gave great satisfaction to the younger party, but it was equally distasteful to the older members. They did not take kindly to his sermons and openly complained of their dryness and unspiritual character. The new minister was sorely troubled in spirit under a sense of inability to satisfy his congregation. Many of the old members ceased to attend the services of the Samaj and took their complaints to Devendra Nath, who however felt

sure of the wisdom of his choice and encouraged his young colleague in the discharge of his new duties.

The appointment of Mr. Sen as minister was marked by another event. On the occasion of this ceremony Mr. Sen showed his moral courage by introducing his young wife, not more than fifteen or sixteen at the time, to the family of Devendra Nath Tagore, who belonged to an excommunicated class of Brahmins and with whom social intercourse was strictly forbidden by the custom of Hindu society. In spite of the strong opposition offered by his relations, Mr. Sen brought his wife to witness the ceremony of ordination and from that day, for many months, the doors of his own house were shut against him by his orthodox relations. As Mr. Sen's orthodox relatives forsook him, the old leader of the Brahmo Samaj extended to him his warm hospitality. He gave shelter to him and his wife in his own house, counted them amongst his own children, and showed them every attention that a father could do.

I have already referred to the agitation for educational reform that Mr. Sen had set on foot in the previous year and also to the correspondence he had opened on that subject with Prof. F. W. Newman in England. (That agitation culminated this year in the opening on the 1st of

March, of the Calcutta College, an institution for the higher education of young men. Devendra Nath bore the principal part of the initial expenses of this institution and Mr. Sen became the principal and manager.) The school house soon became a rendezvous for the younger party, principally of the first batch of missionaries already referred to. Here Mr. Sen's brother, Krishnavihari Sen, and some of the sons of Devendra Nath received their first instruction and here also some of those devoted workers, who subsequently became prominent missionaries of Mr. Sen's Samaj, volunteered their services as teachers, and received their first discipline in unselfish and devoted work.

The new convictions of the members of the *Sangat* were carrying them forward far beyond the limits set down by the habitual caution and daily practice of the elderly members of the Samaj. As early as this year they formed the daring project of celebrating an intermarriage between persons of different castes, a thing highly revolutionary in the eyes of orthodox Hindus, and never contemplated by the Brahmo reformers before. The young men persuaded one of their number to marry a girl belonging to a lower caste. But this marriage was celebrated in secret and was not noised abroad. Devendra Nath, if apprised of it at all, did not encourage it

by his presence or approval and silently passed it by. But it must have filled his mind with many misgivings as to the probable future of the Samaj under the guidance of the younger men. However, he manifested no sign of any uneasiness for some time yet to come. He went on showing undiminished confidence in his young colleague.

For sometime after Mr. Sen's appointment as minister of the Samaj, he was not allowed to return to his paternal house, to which he had a lawful claim ; nor was his share of paternal inheritance given to him by his uncle, who was the trustee of that inheritance. Mr. Sen had to threaten his uncle with legal proceedings before he could secure his portion of the inheritance. In the midst of these troubles, he was further afflicted by an excruciatingly painful malady necessitating repeated operations which kept him confined to his bed for several months and raised him immensely in the estimation of his young friends on account of the great patience and fortitude he manifested under his sufferings.

As the year 1863 drew near, all the clouds cleared off. Mr. Sen was restored to health and was readmitted into his own family dwelling house. The first proprietary right that he exercised in his recovered house was the performance of the *jatkarma* or post-natal ceremony of his first son,

Karuna Chandra, on the 11th of January according to the newly framed code of rituals of the Samaj. His decision on that subject brought on another serious difference with his relatives, all of whom, with the exception of his mother, left the house in the possession of Mr. Sen's Brahmo friends, who mustered strong on the occasion. Devendra Nath conducted the ceremony and supplied all the wants which the hasty withdrawal of Mr. Sen's relations had left unfulfilled.

The *Sangat* meetings, which since Mr. Sen's banishment from home had been transferred to the Calcutta College, were reinstated in the Kalutolah house and the young men began to develop a fiery zeal for preaching their new principles in other parts of the country.

The *Indian Mirror* of the 1st April, 1863, notices the foundation of a society called the "Society of Theistic Friends" for the promotion of spiritual and general culture and of unselfish activity amongst the members of the Samaj. It arose in this way. Dr. Bhaudaji of Bombay, who had acquired a European reputation for his scholarship, paid a visit to Calcutta during this year. He was present at one of the weekly services of the Samaj and remarked that the Brahmos, like the Buddhists, practised too much contemplation and too little practical benevolence. He admired the Bethune

Society and suggested the necessity of a similar institution in the Brahmo Samaj. Mr. Sen took up this idea and started the Society of Theistic Friends with Babu Taraknath Dutta as Secretary. Besides organising public lectures and getting up occasional meetings for the discussion of religious questions amongst the members of the Samaj, [the society] ^(the society) earnestly addressed itself to the task of encouraging habits of study amongst Hindu ladies shut up in the zenana, by appointing standards, holding annual examinations and distributing prizes to successful candidates.]

[The active interest of the members of the Brahmo Samaj in female education is said to have been considerably strengthened from this time. Side by side with the efforts made by the Society of Theistic Friends for the encouragement of education inside the Zenana, the first monthly journal for women called the *Bamabodhini* also made its appearance at about this time under the editorial management of Babu Umesh Chandra Datta, one of the members of the Society, whose persistent energy throughout life served to keep up the paper which continues its existence to this day. Devendra Nath heartily co-operated with the Society of Theistic Friends and delivered a lecture at one of its meetings, narrating his twenty-five years' experiences of the Brahmo Samaj.

On the 28th April of 1863, Mr. Sen delivered his memorable lecture on "The Brahmo Samaj Vindicated," in reply to a discourse delivered by the Rev. Lal Behari Dey, a well-known Christian writer already referred to, and editor, at that time, of a weekly paper called the *Indian Reformer*. Mr. Sen spoke from a lofty standpoint of broad catholicity, in striking contrast to the flippant and carping criticism of his Christian antagonist. It produced a profound impression throughout the country and evoked warm admiration even from old Dr. Alexander Duff, who shortly after left this country, with the declaration that "the Brahmo Samaj was a power and a power of no mean order."

An important event of this year was the formal appointment of Bijay Krishna Goswami as a missionary of the Samaj, and his visit at the end of the year to Baganchra, a village in the Jessore district, whence a petition had come from a number of Pirali families for the services of a Brahmo preacher. The Piralis were an excommunicated class of Brahmins ostracised from Hindu society for the violation of some caste regulations during the days of the later Mahomedan rulers. Bijay Krishna initiated twenty-three of these families into Brahmoism during this memorable visit.

But the ordination of Bijay Krishna as a missionary was not the only encouragement that the

old leader gave to the younger party. Some time after the installation of Mr. Sen as the minister of the Church, he appointed him the Secretary and his friend Praṭap Chandra Mozoomdar the Assistant Secretary of the Samaj and also entrusted the latter with the work of editing the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, in the place of Pandit Ananda Chandra Vedantabagish. These appointments indicate that the younger party were put in charge of the general affairs of the Samaj practically from the day of Mr. Sen's appointment as minister, a step that gave great offence to the older members of the Samaj, who still formed the majority of its managing council. Perhaps it was at this time or soon after, that, under the leadership of Babu Kanaye Lal Pyne, a prominent member of the old Akshay Kumar Datta party, some older members, including amongst them Babus Thakurdas Sen and Govind Chand Dhar, two well-known members of that party at that time, seceded from the Samaj, as a mark of their protest against what they considered to be the high-handed proceedings of Devendra Nath and established a separate Samaj of their own, called the *Upasana Samaj*, in another part of the town, where they began to conduct divine service according to a new form framed by themselves and revised by Pandit Iswar Chandra

Vidyasagar, the celebrated widow-marriage reformer and formerly the secretary of the *Tattva-bodhini Sabha*.

Before proceeding further with a detailed account of the other important events of 1864, a year memorable as the one in which the first note of discord between the older and the younger parties was sounded, I must pause a while and try to give the reader some idea of the new spirit which the younger party had evolved during the few previous years.

I have already referred to the marriage of Sukumari, the second daughter of the old leader, the first domestic ceremony performed according to Brahmo ritual. But the spirit that brought about that act of reform did not stop there. It went on producing other results, some of which have been already mentioned, such as the *jatkarma* ceremony of Mr. Sen's first son, Karuna Chandra. The examples set by the two leaders were soon followed by others. Wherever the new missionaries of the Samaj went, they preached one gospel and laid all the emphasis upon one principle. "Act, act," they exclaimed, "act according to your convictions. Discard idolatry and caste, for they are abominations." Their preachings met with a warm response from the educated community all over the country.

Brahmo *Anusthans* or social and domestic

ceremonies, began to multiply in unlooked-for quarters. Young men belonging to influential families of Brahmins one after another discarded the sacred Brahminical threads, the badges of caste, and refused to bow before their family idols. As a result of the exertions of the devoted band of new missionaries, who had given up all to be preachers of God's truth, new Samajes began to spring up in every important district of Bengal and even in distant provinces. Every fortnight the *Indian Mirror*, the able organ of the younger party, reported the establishment of new Samajes, the opening up of new fields of propagation, and cases of conversion of many young men and also of their persecution by their relatives. These reports were freely quoted by the leading papers of the land, and thus the sayings and doings of the Calcutta reformers were widely circulated throughout the country.

In Bengal the new ferment roused up the spirit of old Hinduism. "Put them down, put them down," was the cry raised everywhere by the leaders of orthodox Hinduism. Every family that sent its children to Calcutta became apprehensive lest they should come under the influence of the new reformers. The engines of social persecution were set in motion in every part of the province. At Dacca, where Aghorenath Gupta,

a young missionary of Mr. Sen's party, had been sent as a teacher in the recently established Brahmo School, and where Bijay Krishna also went, social persecution was in full operation to save young men from the prevailing contagion. There some young men, notable amongst them, Babu Banga Chandra Roy, who still figures so high as an apostle of the New Dispensation in Eastern Bengal, joined young Aghorenath and roused up a new spirit amongst young men. At Govindapore, a village twelve miles south-east of Calcutta, a young man was treated in the most brutal manner by his relatives for having dared to invite from Calcutta a number of Brahmo friends with the object of celebrating the *shraddha* ceremony (memorial rite) of his deceased father according to the new code of rituals. At Mazilpore, a village thirty miles south-east of Calcutta, the land-lords of the village tried to crush the little party of young Brahmos by all the means of social persecution at their command. At Bhagalpore, an important town in Behar, the leading members of the Hindu community combined in 1863, to put down the new spirit of Brahmoism, threatening every one who dared to join the reformers with excommunication. But the conflagration was spreading. Sparks of living fire were flying in every direction carried forward by

the wind, as it were, setting district after district and village after village ablaze. And before it was put down in one village, lo ! a neighbouring one was on fire. Such was the influence of the Brahmo Samaj at this period even in the remotest districts. The ferment caused by it was something unprecedented in Bengal.

In the beginning of the year 1864, letters were received in Calcutta, from Bombay and Madras, urgently calling for missionary visits. The news of the Brahmo agitation in Calcutta had spread to those provinces and made men anxious to listen to the new gospel. These urgent appeals coming from inquirers at last influenced Mr. Sen to undertake a missionary tour to those provinces. Accompanied by Ananda Prasad Chatterji, one of his young associates, he started for Madras and Bombay on the 9th February, 1864. His visit was eminently successful. It stimulated religious enquiry, and led to the establishment of the Veda Samaj in Madras in that year, and indirectly of the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay a few years later.

In the month of May, the marriage of the eldest daughter of Rajnarain Bose, the late President of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, was celebrated with a leading member of the younger party at Midnapore. Many Calcutta Brahmos

assembled at Midnapore on that happy occasion. This marriage also, like the marriage of Devendra Nath's daughter, gave a great impetus to the cause of Brahma ceremonies.

From this year Bijay Krishna Goswami began to visit the village of Baganchra with some young associates. The advent of the missionaries caused great sensation in those parts and roused considerable public attention. After this Baganchra became an important field of the mission work of the progressive party, where Bijay Krishna with a number of earnest co-adjutors opened, in a few years, a school for the education of the children of the Brahma families, established a dispensary for distribution of medicine to the malaria-stricken poor, and spent considerable time, at intervals, ministering to the spiritual needs of the converted families. He was their patron saint, as it were, and his influence amongst them was supreme. Later on, when he protested against the Kuch Behar marriage, he did so from Baganchra and the Baganchra Brahmos followed him and joined the Sadharan Brahma Samaj.

On the 2nd of August of that year (1864), the advanced section of Mr. Sen's party took a daring step by celebrating another inter-marriage between persons of different castes. It was not only performed in accordance with the non-

idolatrous rites of the Samaj, but was a case of widow-remarriage as well, which in itself was looked upon as a great revolution. The orthodox Hindus as well as the elderly members of the Samaj were shocked beyond measure. This marriage furnished a fresh cause for difference between the old leader and the progressive party.

When the shock arising from this daring act was still fresh in the mind of Devendra Nath, there came another great change. Bijay Krishna Goswami, from Baganchra, had been writing to Keshub Chunder Sen, the Secretary of the Samaj, protesting against the custom of allowing thread-bearing Brahmin ministers to occupy its pulpits, and intimating his desire to give up all connection with the Samaj unless that evil was remedied. In this protest Bijay Krishna was supported by the whole body of the *Sangat* men. The two Calcutta leaders were therefore placed in a very critical position. They had to make up their minds rather hastily. It was decided to dismiss the old thread-bearing assistant ministers and to engage in their places the services of threadless ones. Accordingly, it was resolved to appoint Bijay Krishna Goswami and Annada Prasad Chatterjea as assistant ministers. The arrangements were hurriedly got up and towards the middle of that month the two mission-

aries of the younger party were ordained *Upacharyas* or assistant ministers, as a peace-offering to that party.

But this step served as the last straw that broke the camel's back. It brought matters to a crisis. Amongst the dismissed ministers was Ajoddhyanath Pakrashi, who was held in high esteem by all. His dismissal made the members of the older party feel that it was high time that they should shake off their grim silence and distinctly tell the old leader, respect for whom had kept them tongue-tied so long, that they could tolerate such things no longer. Accordingly, they made earnest representations to Devendra Nath, who was thus placed in a critical position. He was face to face with a most serious problem. He felt that the alternatives before him were either to part company, once for all, with these revolutionaries and their gifted leader, or to allow the Samaj to be drawn away from the old Hindu lines laid down by Raja Ram Mohun Roy, within which he had struggled all along to keep it. His resolution was soon taken. He made up his mind to disregard all considerations of attachment and personal friendship and to give up even the chosen band of devoted men whom he valued so much on account of their earnestness and sincerity. His mind once made up, he proceeded to give effect to his

resolution in that quiet and firm manner in which he had acted all through his life.

From this time forward one event after another happened in quick succession which daily widened the breach between the two parties. Mr. Sen felt that a storm was impending and forthwith proceeded to organise a *Brahmo Pratinidhi Sabha* or a Representative Assembly, with the object of securing the voice of the general body of Brahmos in controlling the affairs of the Church. The first meeting was held in the Brahmo Samaj house, Devendra Nath himself presiding. But before anything could be done to re-unite the conflicting elements, an event intervened which further widened the gap between the two parties.

The repairs of the Samaj building, owing to the damages caused by the terrific cyclone of October, 1864, having become necessary, the services of the Samaj were temporarily transferred to the house of Devendra Nath. Then happened an event which I shall narrate in the words of Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar, the biographer of Keshub Chunder Sen.

“While there, one Wednesday in November, it was so arranged that before the newly elected *upacharyas* (assistant ministers, who had renounced their Brahmanical thread) arrived, the two former *upacharyas*, who had been deposed for retaining their sacred threads by the authority of Devendranath himself, were installed into the pulpit again. In order that this might be done without

hindrance, the devotional proceedings were begun a few minutes earlier than the appointed time. When on arrival at the place of worship Keshub and his friends witnessed this irregularity they left the service and warmly protested. Devendranath replied that as the service was being held in his private house he had the right to make what arrangement he liked. But Keshub's party insisted that it was the public worship of the Brahmo Samaj, only transferred for a little interval to his house by the consent of the congregation ; now if he chose to violate rules laid down under his own presidency, they must decline to join such services in future. Thus began this act of secession from the parent Samaj at Jorasanko."

But the actual secession did not take place till a later date. On that occasion, however, Mr. Sen quietly took his seat amongst the congregation ; but his more ardent associate, Bijay Krishna Goswami, stood at the door and prevented such of the younger party as he could persuade from joining the congregation and led them out to hold an independent service on the terrace of the house of one of them. It is worth recording here that one of the re-installed assistant ministers was Ajoddhyanath Pakrashi, whose hasty dismissal was such a cause of complaint to the older members.

The hostile attitude assumed by the younger party made Devendra Nath come to the decision to remove them from all office and power in connection with the Samaj ; and the steps that he took in the direction of resuming the functions of the Samaj from them were : (1) as the sole

Trustee of the Samaj he resumed the charge of all the affairs of the Samaj ; (2) he dismissed the old managing council, amongst whom there were some members of the younger party, and appointed a new council consisting exclusively of older members ; (3) he appointed his eldest son Babu Dwijendranath Tagore and Pandit Ajoddhyanath Pakrashi respectively as Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Samaj in the place of Mr. Sen and Mr. P. C. Mozoomdar ; (4) he took charge of the *Tattwabodhini Patrika* from the hands of the younger party, who nothing daunted by their loss of power started the *Dharmatattwa*, a monthly Bengali journal as their own organ.

Mr. Sen on his part saw that the great struggle was coming to a head and at once girded up his loins for it. He made up his mind to leave the Trustees of the Samaj in undisturbed possession of the Samaj property and the weekly services, but decided to retain in the hands of his party the larger department of mission operations. After his visit to Madras and Bombay, the thought had suggested itself to his mind that some means should be adopted to secure co-operation amongst the scattered Samajes whose number was daily multiplying and to start a central organisation which would serve as the head office helping and strengthening them all. This larger

Brahmo Samaj in his eyes far overshadowed the smaller one then located in the house at Jorasanko. He proceeded to carry his idea into practice by trying to make the Representative Assembly, called the *Brahmo Pratinidhi Sabha*, the central missionary organisation to which the provincial Samajes were called upon to send their delegates. Henceforth repeated meetings of the Sabha were called during the next two years and efforts were made to carry on mission operations with redoubled energy.

No words of mine can describe the spirit of self-sacrifice that actuated the first band of missionaries at this time. They could not command even the bare necessities of life. On the other hand they were subjected by their orthodox Hindu relatives to the bitterest persecution, were driven out of their homes with their families, and thrown for their subsistence on the support of a small community of fellow-believers, most of whom were homeless and friendless like themselves. Their privations were so great that one shudders to think of them even at this distance of time. Yet the new workers were cheerful and carried forward the new gospel far and wide, a noble work in which they were backed by their young wives, who also had imbibed their zeal.

Though no formal act of schism had yet taken place, the year 1865 dawned upon a church practically divided into two hostile camps, the conservatives and the progressives. The first was a party of elderly men who had joined the Samaj since its first revival in 1843, and who in point of practice conformed to the rules of the old Hindu society. They had a peculiar attachment to the old time-honoured institutions of Hinduism, and were loth to do anything that would lead to a violent disruption of the same. They were very much in dread lest they should be excommunicated by their caste-fellows and scrupulously avoided everything that could lead to such an unwelcome result. They regarded with disfavour, and viewed with dismay, the new principles of action enunciated by the *Sangat Sabha*, many of which they considered as positively revolutionary and dangerous. They did not at all like the elevation of the young fire-brand Keshub to the pulpit ; his sermons they had been secretly despising and his services they had been tolerating only out of respect for the venerable Devendra Nath, who almost doated upon his young colleague. They had been daily murmuring that the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, having fallen into the hands of the hot-headed youngsters, had become a vehicle for their unripe thoughts and revolutionary principles. Consequently they were

now glad that a successful check had at last been put on the growing influence of the young men.

The temper of the younger party was quite different. Their ages ranged between eighteen and twenty-five. Many of them had been previously weaned from strictly Hindu ideas by a course of Western education. Several of them, their leader specially, had drunk deep from the fountains of Christianity. They had adopted religion with the fervour of first love. Their youthful enthusiasm made them regardless of all consequences. A broad spirit of catholicity had taken possession of their souls, which looked upon Hinduism or any other sectarian faith as too narrow for them. They fretted against the form of service then prevalent in the Samaj, which consisted of the repetition of Sanskrit texts, selected from the Upanishads. They were not satisfied with the highly formal and learned garb in which the religious life of the Samaj was then clothed, but were eager to communicate the light to the common people in their homely language. With the progress of their convictions the old ministers of the Samaj, who still retained the Brahmanical sacred thread, had become obnoxious in their eyes. There was a weight of conventionalism pressing upon the life of the Samaj which they wanted very much to break through and give fresh vent to the new spirit that

was in them. There was an even more advanced section of this party who went further. They would not stop until they had recast their whole life, domestic and social, according to the new principles. All of them had done away with caste and idolatry, so far as they were individually concerned ; but they would not stop there. They wanted to promote inter-marriages between different castes, a thing never dreamt of amongst the Hindus. They were not content with giving their wives and daughters good education and the light of their faith ; but they longed to admit them into social equality with men, which even many of their own party considered to be fraught with danger.

Thus did the two parties stand towards each other at the commencement of the year 1865. Devendra Nath Tagore and Keshub Chunder Sen still formed, to some extent, the connecting links between them. Their separation was not yet complete. Devendra Nath, though representing the older party and in great sympathy with many of their principles, was still disposed to make all legitimate concessions to the younger one. In the beginning of this year, as a sort of compromise, he offered the pulpit of the Samaj to be used by the preachers of the younger party once a month. But the latter refused to accept the proposal. All their reasons are not known. Perhaps they could

not bring themselves to accept it, because it implied their consent to the continuance of the thread-bearing ministers in office. Whatever the reason might have been, the proposal of the old leader failed to evoke a favourable response.

It was not only Devendra Nath who was in favour of the little conciliation that was still possible, but Keshub Chunder Sen too was anxious to act together as long as it was practicable, and would not cause him any pain if he could avoid it. But he was at heart with the younger party. Though he did not fully sympathise with some of the social ideas of the most advanced section of that party, he could not but feel that they represented what he considered to be the higher type of theism. He felt he must move on with them, or his leadership would be gone. He was in the position of one, who, by his own utterances and acts, had unchained a mighty spirit, which walked abroad, defying all efforts for moderating its course. The clouds were gathering in the horizon, unheeded by the more enthusiastic members, but visible to the keen eye of Keshub Chunder Sen, who strove for sometime, as the events of the next two years will show, to ward off the impending storm, but failed and finally yielded to the inevitable.

As soon as the anniversary festival of 1865 was over, the younger party formed an earnest resolu-

tion to come to a final settlement of the vexed question of the right of the Brahmo public to the management of the affairs of the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj. A requisition signed by a large number of Brahmos was, accordingly, sent to the authorities of the Samaj asking for permission to hold a public meeting of the Brahmo community in the hall of the Samaj. The permission was refused; and the meeting was afterwards held in another house on the Chitpore Road on the 26th of February. It was a stormy meeting. Babu Hemendra Nath Tagore, the third son of Devendra Nath, backed by Babu Nabagopal Mitra, subsequently editor of the *National Paper*, opposed it on the ground that it had been convened without sufficient notice and that many influential Brahmos were absent from it. Their objections were over-ruled by the president of the meeting, which proceeded to pass a resolution condemnatory of the course of action adopted by the Trustees of the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj. Mr. Sen advised the meeting to divide the work of the Samaj into two departments, (1) the management of the Trust property, and (2) the management of the missionary work and other external relations. Leaving the Trustees of the Samaj in undisturbed possession of the trust property and of the services connected therewith, a separate organisation was instituted to take care of the mission funds and of

the mission work. A managing council of this body was appointed with Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar as Secretary.

From this time, every month added to the irritation of both the contending parties, till we come to the month of July, when there was a struggle over the *Indian Mirror*. The cause of the quarrel will be best told in the words of Mr. Sen himself, which we quote from his article headed "Ourselves" in the first number of his own *Mirror*, which he began to publish from the 15th July of this year :—

"Such uniform advocacy on our part of the reformed and faithful Brahmos brought upon us the confirmed hatred and determined condemnation of those who felt offended and irritated by our boldness and honesty ; while by this very course of conduct we were riveting the sympathy of all truly interested in the cause of progress. Hence while the recent changes of the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj took place, one of the principal steps taken by the Trustees was to cut off the *Indian Mirror* from its establishment, and leave it to itself, perhaps to pine away unsupported and unpatronised. Thanks however to propitious Fate, the *Mirror* managed to live since that luckless day, and what is more, it has persisted in its honest and fearless course, nothing daunted. An article was published commenting on the dispute between the Trustees and the members of the Samaj and giving the public an insight into its actual causes. Then again in our impression of July 1st, we happened to say something against the Hindu aspect of Ram Mohan Roy's Church. But another evidence was perhaps needed to establish conclusively our determination to continue honest and fearless to make hidden antagonism burst into open

conflict. A correspondence came in, which we publish in this time, purporting to be a narrative of the progressive stages through which the Brahmo Samaj has passed, and, as usual, was sent in to be set up in type. A preventory was at once issued by the "Manager of the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj" that all manuscripts for the *Mirror* should in future be submitted to them for their inspection. This was of course followed by our vigorous protest and an emphatic declaration not to submit to such arbitrary interference with our independence."

Failing to get access to the old office, Mr. Sen began to publish from another press fresh issues of his own *Indian Mirror* with the old list of subscribers, which he caused to be removed from the old office.

The rest of the story is thus told by Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar, the friend and biographer of Mr. Sen, in the first edition of his book on K. C. Sen.

"Babu Devendranath and his party claimed it (the *Mirror*) as their possession on account of the money contributions made by him and Keshub claimed that morally it was his, by reason of his active share in starting the paper, and of the editorial responsibilities, which for some years he had taken entirely upon himself. The paper was printed at the Samaj Press, and Babu Devendranath refused to allow Keshub to have any access to the printing establishment or to the literary work of the Newspaper, making it in the meanwhile over to another young man. His party thought they had sufficiently snubbed Keshub. The paper was a fortnightly one and they were sure they could get out the next number at their leisure. But what was their astonishment to find that before a week was over Keshub had already got an extraordinary number of the *Indian Mirror* published by an independent press, with a scathing article on the high-handedness which had attempted to

shut him out! The Calcutta Samaj people gave up the conflict in despair, but never forgave Keshub for their defeat."

The explanation offered by Rev. Bhai Gour Govinda Roy Upadhyaya, another biographer of Mr. Sen, of this part of the latter's conduct is, that though the Calcutta Samaj authorities did set up a man named Brojonath Roy as the new Manager of the *Mirror* and advanced their claims upon the papers removed from the old office, Mr. Sen paid no heed to them, declaring that the paper was his own and that he had a right to them; and he did so because he had ascertained by enquiry in proper quarters that "there was no legal difficulty in the way of starting five papers under the name of the *Indian Mirror*."

Thus it will be seen that the starting of the new *Mirror* was a deliberate undertaking commenced after consultation of legal opinion and with the old list of subscribers removed from Devendra Nath's custody, thereby depriving him of the chance of continuing the paper, of which he was the proprietor;—a sad return for the kindness uniformly shown by him. However, I leave the reader to form his own opinion on this most painful part of the quarrel.

Devendra Nath, when checkmated by his clever colleague in this manner, did not assert his proprietary right. He quietly gave up the old paper

and helped Nabagopal Mitra, a young man already spoken of, in starting a fresh English weekly called the *National Paper*, which for some time became the English organ of the Adi Brahmo Samaj.

On the 15th of July, the day that the new *Mirror* was started, there was inaugurated a prayer-meeting, called *Brahmika Samaj*, intended exclusively for ladies. From the day that the progressive Brahmos began to be excommunicated by their orthodox Hindu relations, the number of lady members began to increase year after year ; and the education and social elevation of women came to be recognised as an important item of reform in the programme of the younger party. Some proof of it was afforded as early as 1862, by Mr. Sen's taking his wife to the house of the Tagores. Subsequent proofs are also to be found in the Zenana Education Scheme of the Society of Theistic Friends, and also in the starting of the *Bamabodhini Patrika*. Side by side with other projects of reform this part of their work received the constant attention of the progressive section of the Samaj. But nothing was done in the shape of an organised effort till this year. The establishment of the 'Brahmika Samaj or Brahmo Ladies' Prayer Meeting gave a great impetus to the cause of female education in the Brahmo Samaj. The

sermons that Mr. Sen preached to the ladies were subsequently published in book form.

From this time, properly speaking, commenced a new era of female emancipation. Soon after, *i.e.* in October next, Mr. Sen himself took out a number of Brahmo ladies to the house of Dr. Robson, a Christian missionary, to meet some European friends,—a step considered at the time to be highly revolutionary, and as such it evoked much public criticism. But the movement did not stop there. As it often happens, there was a small coterie of more ardent spirits in the ranks of Mr. Sen's followers who went further. They were not satisfied with the little forward movement inaugurated by their leader in taking the ladies out of their zenana seclusion to Dr. Robson's house, but were bent upon giving their women social equality with themselves. Mr. Sen, who belonged to an aristocratic Hindu family and whose mind was deeply imbued from childhood with ideas of female seclusion, was not prepared to go so far, began to look upon many of the steps taken by the extreme section of the party as fraught with danger and gave them repeated warnings. These first efforts after female emancipation will be further noticed in the next chapter.

On the 23rd July 1865, Mr. Sen delivered a lecture on the *Struggles for Religious In-*

dependence and Progress in the Brahmo Samaj.

In this lecture he laid before the Brahmo public what he considered to be the high-handed dealings of the authorities of the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj, and the failure of the younger party to introduce something like constitutional control over its affairs. There were passionate appeals upholding the religion of the Brahmo Samaj as a liberal religion which encouraged liberty of thought and action, and sought to establish true brotherhood amongst men. In point of eloquence it was a remarkable production and may justly be regarded as the first trumpet-blast of the coming schism. It secured many new adherents to the progressive cause.

On the same day a representation was sent to Devendra Nath in which, amongst other requests, the following points were chiefly urged :—(1) Neither the Acharya (minister) nor the Upacharya (assistant minister) nor the Adhyeta (reader) of the Brahmo Samaj should hold any badge symbolical of caste or sectarian distinctions. (2) " If you do not consent to adopt the system described above with regard to Divine worship, you will oblige us by allowing the Brahmo public to hold their service in the Brahmo Samaj premises on a separate day." This letter was signed by Keshub Chunder Sen, Umanath

Gupta, Mahendranath Bose, Jadunath Chakraverty, Nibaran Chandra Mukerji and Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar.

In reply to this Devendra Nath expressed his inability to comply with either of the requests, on the following grounds :—

“Your aim, it appears, is only directed against the caste-distinguishing badge of Upabit. For many reasons I can not now consent to this proposal of yours, and these reasons are set forth below.”

“Before the promulgation of the code of Brahmo ceremonials the worship of the One True God was in vogue, and those who at that time joined the Brahmo Samaj with zeal and reverence had to prepare themselves like practical Brahmos of the present time for extreme persecution, which many of them did actually suffer. Even you yourselves at first joined the Brahmo Samaj for the sole purpose of the worship of God and to this day perhaps there are among you men who cannot join you in any matter except prayer. But notwithstanding that many among the elder and younger Brahmos have not been able to come forward to practise, neither they nor you are objects of my disfavour. If actuated by the consideration that unless your wishes are complied with, you may separate yourselves, I manifest any indifference towards them I shall be guilty of partiality. When they, who have defended the Brahmo Samaj so long according to their own idea, preserve that idea even now, how can I deprive them of their former privileges?” (Extract from the translation of Devendranath Tagore's letter, as appearing in the *Indian Mirror* of August 1, 1865)

In reply to the second request he said :—

“Your prayer is plainly unnecessary ; because the days already appointed for that purpose (public worship) are intended for all Brahmos, yea not for Brahmos alone, but for all men. If this

separate day you want to be for yourselves alone, I am sorry I cannot consent to your proposal. You have written that by this measure both parties may be served, and in the place of the difference that has sprung up between the Brahmos, good feeling is likely to be engendered. It is my firm belief that from this measure greater mischief is likely to proceed, and in a public Brahmo Samaj it was not proper."

This correspondence to all intents and purposes closed the controversy between the two parties, and the real schism may be regarded to have taken place from this time.

It has been already noticed that from the day of difference with the Adi Brahmo Samaj Mr. Sen directed his attention principally to two things. First, he tried to organise a constitutional assembly for the regulation of the affairs of the Samaj ; secondly, defeated in that object by the Trustees of the Samaj, he betook himself to the next course left open to him, namely, the organisation of a mission department. From the year 1865 he bent the whole force of his nature on this department of his work ; nor was he unsuccessful. Even so early as the beginning of 1866 we find the names of seven missionaries mentioned at the general meeting of the members of the Samaj. These seven missionaries were :—Keshub Chunder Sen, Bijay Krishna Goswami, Umanath Gupta, Mohendra Nath Bose, Annada Prosad Chatterji, Jadunath Chakraverty and Aghore Nath Gupta.

Pandit Gour Govindo Roy, Babus P. C. Mozoomdar, Amritalal Bose and Kanti Chandra Mitra had not yet joined the missionary body, but were in close touch with them and were about to join them. Of the seven missionaries mentioned above, Bijay Krishna Goswami and Annada Prosad Chatterji subsequently left the Brahmo Samaj and joined some mystic sects.

Largely as the result of the exertions of this first band of missionaries, fifty-four samajes had sprung up in different parts of the country before this time and most of them received repeated visits from the itinerant preachers. Bijay Krishna Goswami had visited Eastern Bengal as early as 1863, and had caused considerable stir by his fervid utterances. He was followed by Aghore Nath Gupta, who joined the Brahmo school of Dacca and became the centre of a body of earnest workers. Accompanied by Bijay Krishna Goswami and Aghorenath Gupta, Mr. Sen visited Faridpore, Dacca and Mymensing and other places in Eastern Bengal towards the end of 1865. His eloquent lectures in these parts kindled a new spirit and gave rise to an agitation the like of which had seldom been seen. The orthodox Hindus of Dacca were roused to a sense of danger and started an association with a Bengali organ called *Hindu Hitaisini* or the "Well-wisher of the Hindus" and

set in motion all the engines of social persecution against those who joined the Brahmo Samaj. Mr. Sen shortly returned to Calcutta, leaving Bijay Krishna in the field to consolidate the work he had commenced, who in his turn carried the fire far and wide.

One memorable event in connection with this mission tour of Mr. Sen was the writing of his little treatise entitled "True Faith." He wrote it during a journey by boat. That remarkable little book, one of the best ever given to the world by a religious teacher, clearly indicates the spirit that actuated him at this important period of his life. In this book Mr. Sen describes prudence as the "arithmetic of fools," which expression called forth a protest from Prof. F. W. Newman as being the enunciation of a most dangerous principle of action ; but the former stuck to the principle throughout his life and herein lay the greatness of Keshub Chunder Sen, who showed the way to us of apostolic self-consecration.

On the New Year's day, 1866, Mr. Sen's friends celebrated a fresh case of inter-marriage in which a new ritual was adopted which excluded many things that Devendra Nath had included from the orthodox Hindu ritual. Besides, there was a new and important addition. It included a form of *brata* or vow, which both the contracting parties

were made to take in imitation of the Christian form of marriage. This was looked upon at the time as a great innovation ; but it has since then remained as a marked feature of progressive Brahmo marriages.

This marriage naturally indicated a significant point of difference between the two parties. But in spite of all that difference, Mr. Sen succeeded in persuading old Devendra Nath to provide seats behind the screen, in the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj chapel, for the ladies of his Brahminica Samaj, during the anniversary service of that year, in which Mr. Sen also took part, for the last time, along with Devendra Nath and his eldest son, Dwijendranath. These facts show the conciliatory disposition of Devendra Nath even after so much tension of feeling.

Soon after the anniversary festival of 1866 the members of Keshub Chunder Sen's party held a meeting to bid adieu to Mr. Sridharulu Naidu of Cuddalore in the Madras Presidency, who had been residing amongst them for some months. Having been drawn into the Brahmo Samaj by the Madras agitation of 1864, Sridharulu found his way to Calcutta with much difficulty and was received with enthusiasm by Mr. Sen's missionaries in 1865. After spending about eight or nine months in their company he went back to Madras

in the beginning of 1866. The ceremony was deeply interesting and Sridharulu went back a devoted worker and spent the remaining years of his life, fighting almost single-handed to the last, till his noble career was terminated by a sad accident.

On the 5th of May, 1866, Mr. Sen delivered his celebrated lecture on "*Jesus Christ, Asia and Europe*" in the Hall of the Calcutta Medical College. This lecture was meant as a counter-blast to the bigoted and sectarian utterances of a Christian speaker, Mr. Scott Moncrief, who sometime ago had vilified the natives of this country in some of his speeches. Mr. Sen was then living in retirement in a garden house in the northern suburbs of Calcutta, absorbed in the study of Prof. Seely's well-known book called "*Ecce Homo*," and the high notions that he had formed of Christ's character and teachings by the study of that book he put forth in that lecture as lessons for the Moncrief class of narrow Christians.

The high regard in which Mr. Sen held Jesus Christ at this time will be manifest from the following extracts :

"There can be no question that Jesus was commissioned and destined by Providence for the great work which he came to perform. Nor can we fail to notice the wise arrangements made by Providence for the effectual performance of that work." * * *

"Verily he was above ordinary humanity, sent by Providence to reform and regenerate mankind. He received from Providence wisdom and power for that great work." * * *

"Tell me brethren whether you regard Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter's son, as an ordinary man ! Is there a single soul in this large assembly who would scruple to ascribe extraordinary greatness and a supernatural moral heroism to Jesus Christ and him crucified ? Was not he who by his wisdom illuminated, and by his power saved, a dark and wicked world,—was not he who has left us such a priceless legacy of Divine truth, and whose blood has wrought such wonders for eighteen hundred years,—was not he above ordinary humanity ? Blessed Jesus, immortal child of God ! For the world he lived and died. May the world appreciate him and follow his precepts !"

No wonder that this passionate regard for the founder of Christianity evoked widespread criticism in the native Indian press. It began to be prophesied in the papers that the young leader of the Brahmo Samaj was on his way to conversion to Christianity. To the older members of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, in whose minds there was already existing a strained state of feeling against the speaker, this open declaration of the super-human greatness of Jesus offered a new handle. They said they were glad that the real cause of difference was coming out at last and that the world could now plainly see how far the younger men of the Brahmo Samaj had gone out of the limits assigned to them by Raja Ram Mohun Roy and the Adi

Brahmo Samaj. That lecture widened the breach between the two parties further. But on the other hand it gained for Mr. Sen the friendship of a large number of Christians, including no less a person than Lord Lawrence, the Governor-General of the time, who began to cultivate acquaintance with him from this time and to show marked favour towards him.

Finding his lecture on Jesus Christ universally assailed by his countrymen and giving rise to many misgivings even in the minds of many of his admirers, Mr. Sen delivered next September a lecture on *Great Men*, in which he tried to explain the philosophy of the genesis and the functions of the great prophets of mankind—a view he seems to have imbibed from his study of Victor Cousin. The Christians received it as a concealed recantation of his pro-Christian proclivities and vigorously assailed him in their papers. On the other hand it did not allay the displeasure of the conservative Brahmos, who saw in it only the aberrations of a self-seeking mind. The following extracts from the lecture will give the reader some idea of the main lines of contention :

“The first manifestation of God is in nature, and it is from this that the earliest religious impressions of men and nations have been derived. This is the primary and ordinary revelation of God, and one which is accessible and intelligible to all alike. Man in

the simplicity of his uneducated mind, and without the aid of logic or philosophy "traces nature up to nature's God." He cannot but do so."

"But is God manifested only in matter? Is the volume of nature his only revelation to man—the only source from which we are to derive our knowledge of his nature and attributes and our relations and obligations to him? There is another revelation. There is *God in History*. He who created and upholds this vast universe, also governs the destinies and affairs of nations. * * * History is not what superficial readers take it to be, a barren record of meaningless facts—a dry chronicle of past events, whose evanescent interest vanished with the age when they occurred. It is a most sublime revelation of God, and is full of religious significance." * * *

"But in what manner does God manifest himself in history? Through great men. For what is history but the record of the achievements of those extraordinary personages who appear from time to time and lead mankind? And what is it that we read therein but the biography of such men?"

"Great men are sent by God into the world to benefit mankind. They are his apostles and missionaries who bring to us glad tidings from heaven; and in order that they may effectually accomplish their errand they are endowed by him with requisite power and talents."

"Great men possess a representative character. They are representative in a double sense:—(1) They represent their country and age; (2) they represent specific ideas. This quality is essential to greatness. * * * Every great man comes into the world with a certain great idea fixed in his mind which it is his mission to realize and stamp on his age. This idea is not an accident, but the essence of his being. It is not a doctrine learnt from books or deduced by reasoning. It is divinely implanted in his mind; it is inseparable from his nature, and is interwoven with his being." * * *

"And though Jesus Christ, the Prince of Prophets, effected

greater wonders and did infinitely more good to the world than the others, and deserves therefore our profoundest reverence, we must not neglect that chain or any single link in that chain, of prophets that preceded him and prepared the world for him; nor must we refuse honor to those who coming after him have carried on the blessed work of human regeneration for which he lived and died."

The lecture closed with the description of certain characteristics of great men which enabled them to successfully perform the task divinely appointed for them. It was a highly thoughtful one, and laid down very clearly many deeply spiritual points of doctrine. But it failed, as has already been said, to allay the discontent of the conservative section of the Samaj, and the parties found themselves to be at greater variance with each other after the delivery of these lectures than ever before.

The necessity for a formal schism began to be discussed in the pages of the *Indian Mirror* from the middle of this year. By that time many of the provincial samajes were prepared for such a course, and letters were received from 120 Brahmos, both men and women, in favour of such a proposal. A meeting was accordingly held on Sunday, the 11th of November, in the house of the Calcutta College, on the Chitpore Road, when more than two hundred people assembled in spite of extremely bad weather, and the *Brahmo Samaj of India* was formally established.

Before the proceedings commenced, Babu Nobogopal Mitra, the editor of the *National Paper*, stood up to oppose the formation of the New Samaj; but he was over-ruled and the meeting proceeded to elect Babu Umanath Gupta as its chairman. After the reading of a number of texts from different scriptures, the chairman opened the proceedings with his preliminary remarks and called upon Keshub Chunder Sen to move the first resolution, who duly proposed the organisation of a new society called the *Brahmo Samaj of India*. He was seconded by Aghorenath Gupta. But opposition was once more forthcoming. One of those present read a paper pointing out the impropriety of holding such a meeting in the absence of the spiritual leaders of the Samaj; whereupon Babu Nobogopal Mitra once more sprang to his feet and urged the same point upon the attention of the meeting. Babus Kanti Chandra Mitra and Nilmani Dhur defended the course adopted by the progressive section of the Brahmos in organising a new Samaj. At last, after much discussion, Mr. Sen's resolution was adopted by the meeting.

Then came a number of other resolutions moved and supported by Mohendranath Bose, Prasanna Kumar Sen, Bijay Krishna Goswami, Haralal Roy, Hara Chandra Majumdar, Govinda

Chandra Ghose, Amritalal Bose, Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar and others, most of whom have taken an important part in subsequent Brahmo history. One of these resolutions related to the publication of a compilation of sacred texts from different scriptures and another laid down the duty of sending a farewell address, conveying the love and reverence of the younger members of the Samaj, to Devendra Nath Tagore.

Thus was the *Brahmo Samaj of India* set afloat. Curiously enough, among the many resolutions passed at this meeting there was none appointing office-bearers, or a governing council or auditors, or public functionaries of any kind. The promoters of the meeting were blissfully oblivious, through ignorance no doubt, of the needs of a constitutional method of government; so much so that, in the absence of any office-bearer, Babu Umanath Gupta, the president of this meeting, had to call the next meeting of the new Samaj in 1867, when Mr. Sen was appointed Secretary.

Thus the *Brahmo Samaj of India* was ushered into existence with no governing body, no rules, no constitution, but with God above as the President, as it was declared at the meeting, and Keshub Chunder Sen as its virtual Secretary. No wonder that another schism on constitutional lines became necessary afterwards.

Let us review the condition of the Brahmo Samaj at this parting of the ways. The facts I cull from an article in the *Indian Mirror* of January 1, 1866, reviewing the general progress of the Samaj. There were at the time of the schism fifty-four samajes, fifty of which were in Bengal, two in the North-Western Provinces, one in the Punjab, and one in Madras. Of these more than twenty-five were established during the preceding decade. Eight samajes out of that number had independent chapels of their own, whereas the others held their weekly services in rented houses or private lodgings. Nor were the Brahmos inactive at that time in educational matters. Besides the Calcutta College there were both boys' and girls' schools at Chandernagore, Bhastara, Gournagar, Kōnnagore and only boys' schools at Ranchi, Burdwan, Behala, Bareilly, and Nibadhoy. There were thirty-seven periodicals devoted to the propagation of Brahmoism. Besides the *Tattwabodhini Patrika* of the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj, there were two journals of the same name, one in Urdu published from the North-Western Provinces and another in Telegu published by the Veda Samaj of Madras. These were facts indicating that the Brahmo Samaj movement was making itself felt as a power in the land. The majority of these samajes, it need hardly be said, sided

with the progressive party at the time of the schism.

After the schism, the Adi Brahmo Samaj quietly retreated into its old position of Hindu monotheism. Its organ, the *Patrika*, maintained a dignified silence on the main issues of the contest and seldom replied to the adverse criticisms of the secessionists. The attitude of Devendra Nath Tagore, during this period of party struggle, was calm, dignified and lofty. He never opened his lips, never replied to a single charge, never made a single retort, and never gave any personal explanation ; but patiently bore all, apparently satisfied with the thought that he had done his duty to the Church entrusted to his charge by Ram Mohun Roy.

So great was the old leader's disappointment at the secession of Keshub Chunder Sen and his friends that following the old Hindu practice of retiring from active duties of life after fifty, he soon retired from active participation in the work of the Samaj, leaving its affairs in the hands of a committee, with his trusted and valued friend Babu Rajnarain Bose as its President. After this the venerable sage spent most of his time in his favourite spiritual exercise of travelling in unfrequented parts of the country, occasionally visiting Calcutta and spending short intervals

with his family. During the course of these travels he visited Cashmere, the Murrhi Hills, the Mussoori Hills, the Darjeeling hills, Bombay, Gujarat and China. Wherever he went he helped and encouraged the theistic cause, and wonderfully accelerated the spiritual life of the struggling theists. He maintained throughout an attitude of love and sympathy to all sections of the Brahmo Samaj, and took part in their religious services whenever his health and leisure would permit. Nor was he altogether idle as to the propagatory part of his work during these years. Three little treatises composed in Bengali during these years, respectively called "*Progress in Knowledge and Religion*", "*Immortality and Salvation*" and "*A Gift*," are remarkable productions in their way, and form excellent compendiums to his ever-memorable sermons. During these years he spent thousands of rupees in aiding the Brahmo cause, in fact many a good cause. As his final act he endowed and made over to a body of trustees his *Shantiniketan*, the garden house at Bolpore in the Birbhum District, where he had spent so much time for his own spiritual exercises, to be used in future as a place of periodical retreat for all classes of theistic devotees. After a life so worthily and usefully spent, he passed away in January, 1905, followed to the place of cremation

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by hundreds of loving disciples, belonging to all sections of the Samaj and by large numbers of his countrymen belonging to all classes of society. He has left behind him an autobiography which will ever remain a wonderful book for the spiritual study of succeeding generations.

Within a few years after the retirement of the revered leader, ill-health obliged Babu Rajnaraian Bose also to leave Calcutta, and permanently settle down at Deoghur, a health resort in the Santhal Perganas, whence he helped the members of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, to the best of his powers, by his counsel and literary contributions, in carrying on the work of the Samaj as long as he lived. Here he breathed his last in September 1899, loved and revered by all.

Since the days of the schism, the Adi Samaj has kept up the quiet tenor of its ordinary work, with the exception of one or two occasions when it had to enter the lists against its more ambitious rival. First in 1868, to be noticed hereafter, when Babu Rajnarain Bose up took his pen to warn his young co-religionists against the error of man-worship into which he thought they were then falling; and secondly, on the occasion of the Brahmo Marriage Bill controversy, when the Adi Brahmo Samaj offered a strenuous opposition to

the policy of the progressives and sent a petition against the Bill as framed in 1871.

It was during the period of this controversy, that Babu Rajnarain Bose delivered a lecture on the superiority of Hinduism over all other systems of faith, which was noticed in the *Times* and formed a subject of public discussion in this country for many months. What he proclaimed as true Hinduism, and whose superiority over other faiths he publicly upheld, was not any idolatrous form of it, popularly known as Hinduism, but that pure monotheistic form of it which has ever been the faith of the Adi Brahmo Samaj. This lecture was delivered in 1872 under the presidency of Devendra Nath Tagore, and furnished matter for sharp criticism to the progressive Brahmos, who got up a counter-meeting under the presidency of Keshub Chander Sen, and papers were read by two of their leading men, advocating the universality and catholicity of the religion of the Brahmo Samaj.

With the exception of these controversies the Adi Brahmo Samaj has pursued a course of unobtrusive existence, marked by a singular absence of all reformatory zeal or propagandist activity. Amongst its noted preachers, after the separation of the progressives, were Pandits Becharam Chatterji and Ajodhyanath Pakrashi,

who upheld its banner and rendered signal service to its cause. Of these Pandit Pakrashi succumbed rather too soon, dying within a few years after the first schism, universally respected for his deeply spiritual ministrations. Pandit Becharam carried on the work for a longer period, mainly keeping up the Adi Samaj work at Bhowanipore in the southern suburbs and at Behala, his native village.

The *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, the old organ of the Samaj, is still existent (the *National Paper* having died in the interval) and is characterised by deep thought and earnest piety. It is still doing good work in its own way. But the expectations of its founders that by giving a distinctly Hindu character to the movement they would make the Adi Samaj more acceptable to the Hindus in general have not been fulfilled. The Samaj has failed to secure a large following from amongst orthodox Hindus. That is perhaps to be partly accounted for by its lack of missionary activity and want of enthusiasm amongst its members for its accepted ideals. Whatever the cause may have been, it is a fact, however, that the number of families who have actually joined the Adi Brahmo Samaj is very much smaller than the number of those who have joined the other two progressive sections. The former's policy of keeping social reform in the background has acted

most prejudicially upon its progress as a social power for lifting the people ; and the consequence has been that the majority of its members are, even now as they were fifty years ago, men intellectually sympathising with the movement but practically conforming to all the rules and practices of orthodox Hinduism in domestic life.

During this intensely exciting period the reader has witnessed the temporary union and final divorce between two distinctive types of religious life, which for want of more appropriate names I shall describe as the *Hindu* and the *Christian*. Devendra Nath who has justly acquired the title of Maharshi, a great seer, from his countrymen, was essentially a Hindu in all his spiritual aims and aspirations. He ever remained so. For his ideals of religious life he never turned to the West but always to the East. He received his education in an English school no doubt, and was also one of the most well-read men amongst us in Western literature, philosophy and science, a fact well known only to a few who knew him intimately ; yet in matters of spiritual life he never made any visible approach, even of sympathising friendship, towards Christ and his Church. The only instance when he had an occasion to reflect on the principles or methods of current orthodox Christianity was one of bitter

conflict. From that day he turned away from current forms of Christianity and never again looked on them favourably. The Jewish, and its off-shoot the Christian, conceptions of God, heaven and salvation, seemed to him to be so anthropomorphic and shallow that he passed them by with silent contempt and devoutly turned to the Hindu conception of God as immanent in matter and mind. His solemn conviction was that in matters spiritual, the Hindus had no need to turn to the West, rather the West had much to learn from the East. He had drawn his spiritual inspiration deeply from the Upanishads and similar scriptures and also from the writings of a number of Hindu and Persian sages. In his work in connection with the Brahmo Samaj he had ever kept in view two principles—(1) that the Brahmo Samaj is a purely Hindu institution intended principally for Hindus and representing the highest form of Hinduism, (2) secondly, that its mission is chiefly religious as distinguished from social, and that questions of social reform properly belonged to individual tastes and inclinations. That these views of the exact position of the Adi Brahmo Samaj are correct will be shown by the following extracts from the writings of Babu Rajnarain Bose, the president of the Adi Brahmo Somaj after Devendra Nath :—

“ But though Brahmoism is a universal religion it is impossible to communicate a universal form to it. It must wear a particular form in a particular country. In conformity with such views the Adi Samaj has adopted a Hindu form to propagate Theism among Hindus. It has therefore retained many innocent Hindu usages and customs and has adopted a form of divine service containing passages extracted from the Hindu Shastras only ; using a book of Theistic texts containing selections from those sacred books only, and a ritual containing as much of the ancient form as could be kept consistently with the dictates of conscience. It leaves matters of social reformation to the judgments and tastes of its individual members. It only lays greater stress upon renunciation of idolatry and purity of conduct than upon social reformation. The National Hindu Theistic Church, according to the principles laid down above, receives only Hindus. It reckons those progressive Brahmos only as its members who call themselves Hindus not only in race but in religion also on the ground that true Hinduism is Theism. If it be asked why should such social distinctions as caste be observed at all, the reply is that the world is not yet prepared for the practical adoption of the doctrines of levellers and socialists.”

These are exactly the two points on which the two parties separated ultimately. In reply to the Adi Brahmo Samaj cry of “ Brahmoism is Hinduism,” the young reformers cried “ Brahmoism is catholic and universal,” and on the question of caste they definitely declared that its renunciation was as essential to Brahmoism as the renunciation of idolatry. These were the main issues upon which they parted.

In accordance with the above mentioned

feature, the Adi Brahmo Samaj has reasserted its principles, after the separation, in two remarkable ways ; first by modifying its *Anusthanpaddhati* (code of domestic and social ceremonies) by the introduction of the ceremony of investiture of Brahmin youths with the Brahmanical thread, of course in an unidolatrous way ; and also by the insertion of some of the peculiar Hindu matrimonial rites, such as the *Saptapadigaman* (the going round seven steps with the husband) which were omitted from the first compilation. Secondly, as far as the present writer is aware, its pulpit is virtually closed against others than Brahmins ; I say virtually because I have not met with any published declaration to that effect ; but as a matter of fact all its preachers, during at least the last thirty years, have been uniformly chosen from amongst the members of the highest caste. It will be remembered in this connection that, according to the traditions of Hinduism, none but Brahmins can be spiritual teachers of the race. In this matter also Maharshi Devendra Nath wished to keep, it seems, as close to the traditions of old Hinduism as possible.

A word with regard to the form of service followed in the Adi Brahmo Samaj is also necessary at this place. The form of service is the same that was compiled before 1850, consisting of a number

of texts from the Upanishads and the Tantras, embodying prayer and thanksgiving, with Bengali translations, which are read with the accompaniment of hymns. The compilation of this form is the greatest monument of the Maharshi's spiritual genius. It was the fruit of much meditation and prayer, added bit by bit as the effects of earnest spiritual experience. He held fast to it throughout his life and conducted his daily devotions according to that form almost to the last day of that life.

Personal traits—I cannot close this chapter without noting down some personal traits of the character of the saintly man who was the leading figure of this period of Brahmo history. Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore was one of the greatest religious geniuses this country has ever produced. He was truly a successor of the great rishis of old. His nature was essentially spiritual. Communion with the Supreme Being was the key to his whole being ; he lived in that atmosphere ; he saw life from that standpoint ; he drew all his inspiration of duty from it, and cherished it above all earthly possessions. He truly made it the pearl of great price, counting every other thing, in comparison with it, as dross. He was born to a princely fortune; and being the eldest son of the first citizen of Calcutta, all the ways of social position and

honour were open to him ; yet he bade adieu to all of them in order to be able to give himself, solely, wholly and unreservedly, to that one aim of his life,—divine communion. With a view to understand this absorbing aim of his life, it is necessary to know how he attained it. The story is the old one, of intense longing and great loneliness of the spirit. Some idea of that spiritual loneliness will be formed from the following lines from his autobiography :—

“ Nothing could remove the agony of my spirit. Where to obtain peace and rest I knew not. At times it so happened that I passed hours upon hours on my couch, lost in deep meditation about the problems that perplexed me, absorbed to such an extent that I forgot altogether when I left that couch, went and took my meals and returned to it for rest. During mid-day I used to steal away at times and visit the Botanical Gardens, because I found it to be quite solitary. I used to take my seat beneath the monumental column in the midst of that garden, my mind immersed in deep misery. Everything seemed to be dark to me. The attractions of the world were gone, but the true nature and attributes of the Supreme were yet fully unrevealed to me ; thus I felt myself deprived of both worldly and heavenly bliss ; my heart was dry and miserable, and the earth seemed to be a graveyard, nothing promised peace or rest for my soul ; in this predicament even the sun’s rays seemed to me surcharged with darkness”.

This deep and intense longing for the revelation of the Supreme Being, with its consequent

search, at last brought deliverance for his soul. He was rewarded with Divine Vision and thereby became a *rishi*. The following is the manner in which he realized that Presence. I quote from the 12th Chapter of his wonderful autobiography :—

“First I beheld this self-effulgent Eternal Spirit in space ; that alone satisfied all my longing and removed the agony of my spirit. I was satisfied with that much, but He was not satisfied with this little. He was *without* so long ; but now He revealed Himself to my spirit *within* ; I beheld him in my soul ; the Deity so long lived in the temple of the external Universe, now he occupied and filled the temple of my soul ; and I began to hear his deep voiceless whispers from there. A thing that I never hoped for came to pass. I attained to a state far beyond my expectation ; being lame, I crossed a high mountain as it were !”

This vision of the Supreme Being was the real turning point of his spiritual life. It kept him steady in his life-mission—namely the establishment of the spiritual worship of the Supreme Being in his land. That he considered to be the best means of preserving the spirituality of his race ; and directed all the energies of his soul towards that end. When the younger party left him to preach and uphold the universal aspect of theism, he uttered not a word of complaint,

but quietly stuck to his ideal to the end of his life.

He was a devout follower of the Upanishadic *rishis*, but was no pantheist on that account. He had no very great regard for the ordinary Hindu mendicant. In fact he hesitated before he appointed Babu Akshay Kumar Datta as the editor of the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, because the latter had praised the Hindu mendicants in one of his writings. He was a literal follower of that part of the teachings of the Gita, where it says—"True *yoga* is unattainable by a person who eats much, nor by one who fasts, not by one who sleeps much, nor by one who keeps awake; it brings peace to him alone, who is moderate in eating and drinking and in the general enjoyments of life, and also in putting forth his active energies." Devendra Nath in spite of his real saint-hood never put on the garb or habits of a *sadhu* or saint. His piety was natural, habitual and modest. He hated and shunned all display of saintliness. His piety was best manifest in a habitual sense of Divine presence, in strict moral integrity and in the punctual performance of even the minutest duties of domestic and social life. This is not the place to describe all that he was or all that he did, to illustrate these remarks. For that I must refer the reader to the published

biographical notices of the sage, confining myself to the delineation of the main features of his character.

Though shunning mendicancy, Devendra Nath was not less devoted to his religious exercises than any mendicant. Habitual communion with God was his daily practice. Every morning his first duty was to chant passages from the Vedas and the Upanishads and to spend some time in thanks-giving and prayer. He would pass days and months on hill-tops and other solitary places in earnest meditation, either communing with the Supreme Spirit or feeding his spiritual nature with the study of the teachings of great spiritual masters. In his own house he would at times shut out from his presence even his dear and near relatives, to be able to spend hours in silent meditation and prayer. On fine moon-light nights he would be seen spending hours upon hours in silent communion. Thus he was able to convert his house, though situated in a crowded quarter of Calcutta, into a solitary abode fit for the deep and profound exercises of spiritual life.

In him we found the combination of two different temperaments. He could pass days and months quite absorbed in abstract speculations, thinking of deep and philosophical problems, living as it were on mountain-heights of spiritual

elevation, and then again, sometimes soon after, when in the arena of active life, he could attend to the duties connected with his large estates or with the personal needs of his numerous household, to the minutest details, and provide for them with scrupulous care. It was his habit to conceive his plans of work slowly, in the light of spiritual communion, and execute them with wonderful tenacity of purpose. His plans once arranged, it was difficult to disturb them; he was so essentially conservative in his inner being. The secret of it all is perhaps to be found in the fact that every duty of his life was a part of his spiritual exercise.

He was punctual, methodical, orderly and serene in his daily life. His eating and drinking, sleeping and study, everything was performed with clock-work regularity. Haste, hurry and confusion were repugnant to him. He was a great lover of nature and loved to live in mountain solitudes, in unfrequented places covered with beauty and verdure, pondering over natural beauty and finding his soul, as it were, in unison with it. In fact, the poetical talents and tastes of his children, for which they are well-known, are an inheritance from him and are largely due to his fostering care and encouragement. His esthetic sense was highly developed. Everything about him was neat and clean, and anything ugly or

unseemly would offend his taste. There were beautiful flowers always on his table and his eyes often rested on them as he sat thinking his high thoughts. After his morning bath he would come out in full dress, clad in the freshest, cleanest and finest silk or linen, and spend the whole day in that condition, as if he was on the point of attending some durbar, or some special Divine service. Here also we must turn to his inspiration from the Upanishads for an explanation. He had learnt from those books that the place where a man tries to compose his mind to Divine communion, should have things "pleasing to the mind and nothing painful to the eyes." He lived in a state of constant communion ; hence was his scrupulous regard for things cleanly and beautiful.

Though enamoured of the sayings of the ancient rishies of India, and valuing above all the treasures of early Sanskrit literature, his love for general culture was very great. He had studied carefully the works of such western philosophers as Kant, Fichte, Cousin, Spinoza, Descartes, Read, Sir William Hamilton, Dugalt Stewart, and others amongst the well-known writers of the last century, and J. S. Mill, Herbert Spencer, &c., amongst the fore-runners of the new age. In fact his reading was vast and various. He would never let any new discovery in science or any newly propounded

theory of life and society to pass without trying to make himself acquainted with its main features. Of religious teachers both of the East and of the West he was a devout student. A more passionate admirer than he of Hafiz, the saint-poet of Persia, or of Baba Nanak, the founder of Shikhism, has scarcely been seen in our day. He had the works of these great masters always by him even in his solitary abodes. He has left his personal library to the *Shanti Niketan*, his favourite resort during the days of his early devotional studies and spiritual exercises, and most of the books deposited there bear the marks of pencil notes on their contents, showing the great care with which he had studied them.

The preceding history of his career has amply illustrated another trait of his character. He always lived in a high altitude of dignified manhood. He never stooped to mean shifts or petty devices. He never descended to the level of his critics or maligners ; but calmly bore all and viewed all questions from a spiritual standpoint. It is a significant fact that his auto-biography suddenly stops short at the year 1858, i. e., when Keshub Chunder Sen joined the Brahmo Samaj. He has recorded no facts relating to the subsequent period of his life. The main reason that impelled him to act in this way was that he did not like to say anything

in self-defence, against the criticisms of Keshub Chunder Sen and his party. All this he left for disinterested observers. Revenge was too low for him and he habitually viewed every question of difference from a spiritual standpoint. What people said about him was of secondary importance to him ; what he really was he thought to be his prime concern. Therein lay his strength and his repose. That calm and undisturbed serenity of mind he maintained in the midst of all vicissitudes of life. He was a true and living embodiment of that teaching of the Gita where it is said : " A truly wise man is never buffeted by his trials and tribulations, does not covet pleasures, and is free from attachment, fear and anger ;—the same is a *muni*." Maharshi Devendra Nath was a true *muni* in that respect. He calmly bore all, even the greatest griefs of life. After having done his duty he quietly rested, regardless of consequences. The spirit in which he did his duty to the Brahmo Samaj, during the party struggles, he once illustrated by citing the instance of a mother, who received the sharp bite of a poisonous snake in her effort to save her child from its attack. Whilst dying she did not mind that snake-bite but expressed her joy in having successfully saved her child. Similarly he was glad at having preserved the integrity of Ram Mohun Roy's Church

and did not mind the attacks levelled against him by the younger party. He maintained that lofty attitude throughout.

Lastly, he was a perfect disciplinarian. He subjected his large household to strict domestic discipline, and would not tolerate the least departure from it. He was truly an old Hindu patriarch in that respect, who meant theoretically and practically to be the sole master of his house ; yet he had a judicious regard for the individual tastes and inclinations of his children, and left them room to develop their individualities.

Though personally not much in favour of the idea of female emancipation, for instance, he did not assert his authority, when his second son Satyendranath took his own wife to a *levee* in the Governor-General's house, nor did he prevent the grown-up girls of his family from taking part in domestic theatrical performances, where many others than family friends used to be present. He was one of the first men in Bengal to open the door of high education to women and when as a consequence of that education some girls of the family chose to grow up unmarried and wanted to choose their own husbands after reaching years of discretion, he accorded to them that right. Indeed the judicious mixture of discipline and liberty was a remarkable feature of his domestic

arrangements. Valuing conscience in himself he valued it in all about him.

In matters of religious life he was essentially constructive and conservative. He had not arrived at religious truth by the *negative* process of dissent but by the *positive* one of revelation and intuition ; consequently religion to him was a matter of direct spiritual experience ;—a reality that held in itself all other realities. Religious life was a growth to him ; not an *intellectual assent* but a *spiritual influence that pervaded and permeated life* ; consequently he had not much sympathy with merely reformatory proceedings. He had not walked by that path. True, he had discarded idolatry, but that also not as an act of reform, but as an act of faithfulness to the *Parama Purusha*, the Supreme Person, to whom alone his soul's allegiance was due. In short from the West he took only two ideas—first, the idea of fidelity to God—secondly, the idea of public worship ; in all other things he was oriental. His idea was to plant the Samaj in India, as the Hindu mode of realizing universal theism, leaving other races to realize that universal faith according to their traditional methods. Hence he was open-handed in his contributions in aid of Mr. Charles Voysey's Theistic Church in London. "What the Adi Samaj is doing in India for Hindus," he used to say, "Mr.

Voysey's movement is trying to do for Christians in England, keeping as close as possible, in matters of forms of service, &c., to the Church of England. I like that method of propagating the new faith ;"—a position best illustrated by the quotation I have already made from the writings of Babu Rajnarain Bose. Such was the man whom Providence had raised to consolidate and carry on the work of Ram Mohun Roy, and to be a living embodiment of the spiritual capabilities of the new faith. Having that example before them, Brahmos have no cause for despair about the spiritual potentialities of their Church.

CHAPTER III

THE BRAHMO SAMAJ OF INDIA

The schism removed the painful tension of feeling under which both the parties were living for some time and accelerated the enthusiasm of the progressives for the work of propagation they had taken in hand. They had suffered long for want of a regular organisation of their work. From the day of their virtual separation from the Adi Brahmo Samaj in 1864, they had no fixed place of worship where they could gather their fellow-believers. In the absence of such a place they had fixed upon a room in the Calcutta College to hold weekly divine service therein on every Sunday morning. But here even Mr. Sen would not join them in the beginning, perhaps for fear of seeming to give his personal support and countenance to a secessionist movement, at a time when he himself was earnestly seeking reconciliation with Devendra Nath. Accordingly, they were left without the inspiration of his personal presence and cheering words. Of course they daily met him in his house and had much personal communion with men of their own way of thinking in the Sangat Sabha, but the state

of hesitancy and the consequent want of solidarity in their work was extremely painful to them. This state of suspense terminated with the schism and infused new spirit into the body.

The first thing that attracted their attention after the schism was the advent of Miss Mary Carpenter, who paid her first visit to this country during that winter. She arrived in Calcutta at the time of the Brahmo schism, and placed herself in communication with the rising Brahmo leader, Keshub Chunder Sen, who heartily took up her cause and gave her a warm reception.

On the 24th November, the ladies of the Brahmika Samaj presented an address to her at one of their meetings. There was also an evening party in the house of Dr. S. Goodeve Chuckerbutty in her honour, where many members of the progressive party were present with their wives;—a new departure which evoked much public criticism at the time. Mr. Sen also organised a special English service in his own house, in honour of Miss Carpenter, to which many English ladies and gentlemen of the town were invited.

On the Christmas day following, something like a special service was held in the house of Mr. Sen, in which Miss Carpenter also took part, by reading passages from the Bible. The advanced section of the progressive party

mustered strong on this occasion with their wives, setting an example of female emancipation by introducing the latter to their male friends. This was done after Mr. Sen and Miss Carpenter had left. This inoffensive and very natural action on their part exposed them to severe criticism even in Brahmo circles, including Mr. Sen, who viewed this step with grave displeasure and held forth many warnings in the columns of the *Indian Mirror*. The attitude of Mr. Sen towards this forward movement at this time was due to the news that, perhaps, now arrived from Barisal of two young men of that town, belonging to a family of landlords, having publicly dined, together with their wives, with the English Officials of the station. These two young men had been drawn into the Brahmo Samaj by the influence of the preachings of Brahmo missionaries like Bijay Krishna Goswami, and were taking a prominent lead in matters of social reform at that time. Their conduct became a subject for hostile criticism in the public press.

But neither the displeasure of leaders like Keshub Chunder Sen, nor the hostile criticism of the public press could restrain the enthusiasm of the little band of female emancipationists. They went on in their career of reform. Finding that the customary female attire of Bengal in those days,

did not suit women going out publicly, they invented, as an experiment, a new mode of dress for their wives, half European and half Indian in its style, and began to take them out publicly to visit their friends in the town and in the suburbs. These dresses furnished matter for laughter and merriment to the outside public, specially to the juvenile population of the streets. The efforts of these reformers were also directed towards improving the education of their wives ; and in the absence of schools where married women could be sent, many of them, in addition to their other absorbing duties, undertook the duty of private tutors at home, in which work they were generously helped by many of their educated male friends, a step that also evoked hostile criticism in Brahmo circles. Thus began the era of female emancipation in the Brahmo Samaj.

At about this time the leaders of the newly formed Samaj celebrated an intermarriage in which they followed a new form of ceremony from which many of the Hindu features of the Adi Brahmo Samaj ritual were expunged and a new ritual was framed which was more western than oriental in its essential features.

In connection with the Christmas celebration, alluded to above, some explanatory words are needed. It has been already observed that almost

since the foundation of the *Sangat Sabha* in 1860, the young members of that body, following the example of Keshub Chunder Sen, had begun to draw their inspiration largely from Christian sources. On the one hand they began to study the Bible for religious edification, and on the other they began to cultivate friendship with Christian missionaries like Dr. Robson of the Scotch Free Church Mission. In the midst of these pro-Christian proclivities came the two lectures "Jesus Christ, Asia and Europe" and "Great Men," and gave a definite shape to the Christian ideals of the progressives. The leader's sentiments towards Christ were promptly responded to by the devoted body of followers who had already attached themselves to him. For a time their minds became absorbed in a study of the excellences of Christ. Regardless of what people said about them they went on developing their new convictions. But it was not the historical Christ to whom they were turning. They spoke in their papers of an ideal and spiritual Christ, meaning thereby the ideal of perfect trust in God, self-sacrifice, and great sympathy for the sinner as illustrated in the character of Jesus. Their ideal Christ gave little satisfaction to their Christian critics, but nevertheless they were deeply impressed and influenced by him. In fact at this time their feelings towards

Christ were half mystical and half historical. The more earnest amongst them felt something like a personal relationship to the historical Jesus. These gave expression to their personal regard by observing, in some manner, the Christmas Day, and even by composing hymns directly addressed to the prophet of Nazareth. But the majority were contented with the beauty of the spiritual ideal, and only tried to imbibe the new spiritual lessons. The infusion of the Christian spirit brought into prominence, during this period, as has already been said, two new phases of religious life—(1) the sense of sin, and (2) the spirit of prayer. It was from this time that long and earnest pleadings with God for the pardon of our sins became customary amongst us. A vivid consciousness of sin cast a gloom over our lives. Brahmo manners became sombre, austere and puritanic. In the streets, in meeting rooms, in the college halls, men could distinguish Brahmos from others by their very looks as it were. There was something peculiar about them. A certain moroseness marked our daily intercourse with each other. Self-denunciation and indifference to the enjoyments of life were our prevailing characteristics. A large number of hymns reflecting the new spirit were composed during the next two or three years, which fanned the flame

of repentance in our hearts. Translations of some of the hymns of this period have been given in the preceding chapter. The growing sense of sin finally culminated in a revival of a novel kind in 1868, to be noticed later on.

The infusion of the Christian spirit brought into the field another characteristic Christian sentiment, namely, an enthusiasm for saving fellow-sinners by carrying to them the new gospel. Hinduism is a non-missionary religion. For ages its teachers, with the exception of those of the Bhakti school, have confined themselves to the development of individual piety, regardless of the sin and suffering of the multitudes around them. Of course they expounded their principles in their writings and often condescended to impart instruction to such as sought them, but they seldom went out of their way to seek the erring sinner. The beautiful Christian ideal of the good shepherd, leaving the ninety-nine sheep on the way and going in search of the lost one, was never realized in their experience. Even now the Hindu sage is one who is quietly seated in some solitary recess, never leaving his seat or going in search of inquirers, but expounding the truths of religion to such only as come to him seeking instruction. It is not his business to carry the message of salvation to aliens. Not so is the Christian missionary.

Following the example of his master he must go about, in season and out of season, seeking the sinful and the lost, with a view to save him. Properly speaking mission-work is a part of his religious life. From the day of the formation of their party the progressive Brahmos, in proportion to the infusion of the Christian spirit, began to manifest enthusiasm for mission work. This became visible from 1861 when Mr. Sen resigned his secular employment in the Bank of Bengal and showed the way of apostolical missionary life. His example was soon followed by others, as has been already narrated. The little missionary body went on slowly increasing in the face of great privations. Some description of the spirit in which they had entered upon their mission-work has already been given. Indeed it was a new experience in Brahmo life. The spirit of utter self-surrender in which the new missionaries took up their work after the schism was a wonder to all. Many of them had given up comfortable situations to be able to devote themselves wholly to their Church. From comfort and ease they had come down to abject poverty. Up to that time there was no organisation, no mission fund, no reproductive work. Their party was largely recruited from the college students, or young

men just entering life. Any aid that these could give was but trifling in comparison with their actual needs. The remark that Jesus once made with regard to himself, *viz.*, "the foxes have their holes and birds have their nests ; but the son of man hath not where to lay his head," literally applied to them at this time. Whatever each day brought they shared amongst themselves according to their individual needs, eating their bread with gladness and blessing the merciful Father who sent it. At times their privations were very great. For months many of them went without shoes, walking barefooted in the streets of Calcutta, and the days were not a few, when their provisions failed altogether and they had to starve. Yet they were cheerful, contented and happy. Amongst the new principles imbibed from the study of the life of Christ was one, "Take no thought for the morrow," which they wanted to carry literally into practice. Their great self-abnegation excited the admiration of even those who were least favourable to the Brahmo Samaj. Their young wives, most of them below twenty, touched by the new enthusiasm, shared in all their privations with a cheerful alacrity. The memory of these days will ever remain in our minds as a truly apostolic period of Brahmo history, where there was the spirit of real asceticism without that

talk of it, in which the Church abounded in subsequent times.

In spite of these privations new recruits were forthcoming, and in the beginning of 1867 we find the names of Amritalal Bose, Kanti Chandra Mitra, Gour Govinda Roy, Kedarnath Roy and Nagendra Nath Chatterji as candidates for missionary life.

The year 1867 opened with a trumpet call in the *Indian Mirror* headed "Brahmos, Arise" and an earnest appeal for renewed zeal in carrying the banner of the new faith far and wide. The appeal was soon followed by the commencement of extensive mission operations. Before the year 1866 had drawn to its close, great efforts were made to get ready a number of publications, including a collection of texts from the scriptures of different nations, to be placed in the hands of the missionaries, who were on the point of starting in different directions. One contingent consisting of Bijay Krishna Goswami, Aghorenath Gupta and Jadunath Chakraverty started for Eastern Bengal, making Barisal their first head-quarters. Here the new spirit was running high. Babu Durga Mohun Das, a pleader of the local court and a man belonging to one of the most respectable and influential families of Eastern Bengal, was now the centre of a reformatory movement, most daring and radical

in its scope, the like of which had never been witnessed in these provinces. It was chiefly through his influence that the young landlords, spoken of before, advanced to show an example of moral courage by publicly dining with the English officials of the station. In the beginning of 1867; Durga Mohun Das came to Calcutta and influenced the three above-mentioned missionaries to accompany him to Barisal. He generously bore the main part of the expenses of maintaining them with their families. From Barisal Aghore Nath Gupta went to Tipperah and Chittagong and Bijay Krishna Goswami went to Dacca, whilst Jadu Nath Chakraverty remained at Barisal in charge of the mission-work there and also acted as teacher in a school specially started for Brahmo ladies. Wherever Bijay Krishna Goswami and Aghore Nath Gupta went, new converts were made and their preachings caused wide-spread ferment. There was no railway then, and no steamer service in most of the places they visited. They had to perform most of their journeys in country boats and sometimes on foot. During their tour they often fell amongst people hostile to the reformed movement and had to put up with great difficulties. But no difficulties discouraged them.

While these three missionaries were working in Eastern Bengal, Mr. Sen accompanied by some

of his young friends was carrying the new light to the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab. In the last week of December 1866, he started from Calcutta with Miss Carpenter to Krishnagar, in the Nadia district, whither she went upon the earnest invitation of the leading citizens. From Krishnagar he started on his mission tour for the Punjab, visiting Burdwan, Bhagalpore, Bankipore, Allahabad, Cawnpore and Dehli on his way. This mission tour was particularly noised abroad on account of the encounter that Mr. Sen had with a Christian preacher, Mr. Tinling, a gifted speaker, who had come out to India with the avowed object of converting the Brahmos to Christianity. Mr. Sen's lecture on "Jesus Christ, Asia and Europe" had encouraged him to entertain such hopes. The two speakers met face to face at Allahabad, and Mr. Tinling soon discovered that the Brahmo leader, in spite of his large professions of love and reverence for Jesus, was yet far from accepting the peculiar tenets of Christianity. He must have returned to his native land very much disappointed. The visit of Mr. Sen to the Punjab was eminently successful. It awakened inquiry in many earnest minds and created wide-spread sympathy with the cause of the Brahmo Samaj.

The missionary party returned to Calcutta in the beginning of April, much refreshed in spirit

by their new experiences. Mr. Sen at once set to work to reorganise the work in Calcutta. In May next he reopened the Brahmo School which had been discontinued owing to the absence of any fixed plan of work during the previous two or three years. Young men once more flocked to listen to the inspired and inspiring utterances of the two Brahmo leaders; for, Devendra Nath also readily responded to the invitation of Keshub Chunder Sen, to take part in the work of the school as before. That shows the lofty fatherly attitude the venerable old leader still maintained towards the progressives even after the schism.

In July Mr. Sen accompanied by his family and many of his young friends visited Barisal to celebrate the marriage of Babu Nibaran Chandra Mukerji, a prominent member of the progressive party, with a sister of Babus Rakhal Chandra Roy and Behari Lal Roy, the two young landlords, who were taking such a leading part in Brahmo work there. Though the occasion for their visit to Barisal was a private and domestic ceremony, the young missionaries utilised the opportunity for the purpose of propagating their faith. Mr. Sen delivered lectures which roused up quite an agitation.

Upon his return to Calcutta Mr. Sen was faced by a new problem. Some of his close and intimate friends had begun to show signs of despondency.

In the midst of great missionary activity and apparent success, spiritual dryness had entered their souls. As a result of the missionary exertions the number of Samajes had risen to sixty-five; the newly started Brahmo Samaj of India had drawn to itself 360 members, twenty-five of whom were ladies; the number of reformed marriages had come up to nineteen, nine of which were inter-caste marriages. While there were these facts to cheer them up, many of the advanced members of the party felt the gloom of despondency settling upon their souls on account of the spiritual tension under which they were living.

Mr. Sen fought against it as best he could; he gave them cheering words of hope and counselled patience, but nevertheless the new responsibility weighed heavily on his spirit and opened up new sources of spiritual strength to him. In the first place, from the beginning of August he introduced the rule of holding daily divine service in his own house, to which he invited such of his friends as could afford to be present. The effect of these services has been thus described by Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar :

“ These services, by a speedy and unforeseen process, acquired profound sweetness, and the emotions of his (Mr. Sen's) powerful nature were stirred to the bottom. With Keshub this was a new experience, with us all it was a new delightful surprise.”

These devotional experiences opened up a new

vista before Mr. Sen's mind. He began to reflect on the nature and tendencies of the Vaishnava modes of spiritual exercise. The suggestion might have come from Bijay Krishna Goswami, who himself was a lineal descendant of Adwaita, the friend and co-labourer of Chaitanya, the Vaishnava prophet of Bengal. Mr. Sen, though himself belonging to a Vaishnava family and nursed in the lap of parents remarkable for their devotion and piety, had largely shaken off his early Vaishnava associations through the disintegrating influence of English education. Like the rest of his educated countrymen he had learnt to look with indifference upon the Vaishnava modes of devotional exercise. He had come to imbibe a strong prejudice against the *Khol* and *Kartal*, the well-known favourite instrumental accompaniments of Vaishnava hymns. But now the thought dawned upon his mind, that the introduction of Vaishnava mode of singing called *sankirtan*, might prove an effective means of propagating Brahmoism. There was Bijay Krishna Goswami near at hand to render aid in making that experiment. He composed experimental hymns in the Vaishnava fashion and introduced his own brother, who was an orthodox Vaishnava devotee himself, to Mr. Sen to lend his aid in the new experiment. Vaishnava *sankirtan* by an infusion of the spirit

of universal theism into it became transformed into Brahmo *sankirtan*. The effect of this change has been thus described by Mr. Mozoomdar :

“ A new epoch dawned upon the Brahmo Samaj by the introduction of this Brahmo *sankirtan*. It meant the opening up of a new world of religious feeling, it laid the foundation of a new spiritual relationship with the most popular of the recent prophets of India, the apostle of Bhakti, namely, Chaitanya.”

Jesus was before the inspirer and teacher of Keshub Chunder Sen, and now came Chaitanya. The two streams combined and made a confluence which soon produced novel and striking results.

In connection with this revival of devotional life another fact is worthy of mention. Faced by the problem of the despondency and discontent of his friends, Mr. Sen tried another experiment. He once more approached Devendra Nath and asked him to come to his rescue by agreeing to meet his friends and give them such spiritual instructions as they needed in their state of spiritual dryness. Devendra Nath gladly responded to the call and, at successive meetings with the progressive workers, expounded to them important principles of spiritual and devotional life.

In the midst of these devotional experiences the second meeting of the Brahmo Samaj of India was held on the 22nd of October, 1867, Mr. Sen presiding. No governing body of office-bearers having been appointed at the

inaugural meeting, this meeting was convened by Babu Umanath Gupta, the president of that meeting. Of the many resolutions passed at this meeting the most important were: (1) the appointment of a deputation to wait upon Maharshi Devendra Nath with a parting address, (2) the publication of the second edition of the collection of texts from different scriptures, (3) the organization of the mission fund, (4) the appointment of a committee of influential men to inquire into the question of the legal validity of Brahmo marriages, and (5) the announcement of God as the president of the Samaj and the appointment of Mr. K. C. Sen as secretary and Mr. P. C. Mozoomdar as assistant secretary.

Strangely enough even at this meeting no governing council was appointed and no step was taken to frame a body of rules laying down the constitution of the Samaj. Amongst the leading members who took part at this meeting we find the names of Umanath Gupta, Amritalal Bose, Trailokyanath Sanyal, Mohendranath Bose, Kanti Chandra Mitra, Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar, Jadu Nath Ghose, all of whom stuck to Mr. Sen to the end, and of others, *viz.*, Anandamohan Bose, Sashipada Bannerji Bijay Krishna Goswami and Jadunath Chakraverti, all of whom subsequently joined the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj.

Within a month of this meeting the above-mentioned deputation waited upon the venerable Pradhanacharya Devendra Nath with an address, which recounted many of the services which the old leader had rendered to the cause and also the special and personal obligation under which he had placed many of the younger party. *

To this address the Maharshi made a suitable reply, which he concluded with the following words :

“ If I find you more successful in this work than I have been, if I find you have successfully carried out my idea to the extent I desire, the joy I shall then feel will be beyond comparison with what this address affords today. The Brahmo Samaj of India now rises from one corner of the country, in future its work will be commensurate with its hope, perhaps that which has not been accomplished up to this time will be accomplished by it.”

These words mark the same noble spirit that actuated John the Baptist when he gave preference to Jesus over himself. However, a formal and public start to the new epoch, inaugurated by the Brahmo Samaj of India, was given by the whole-day festival that was celebrated on the 24th November of that year. These whole-day festivals have become very common since then, but it was the first thing of its kind on that occasion. The proceedings commenced from early morning and were carried

* Vide Appendix—E

on with a short intermission till 10 o'clock in the night. The programme was varied and interesting, consisting of service, sermon, prayer, meditation, exposition of texts, etc. It was a feast of spiritual joy which kept the congregation spell-bound till the last moment. Many did not leave the place throughout the day but kept to their seats, denying themselves food and rest. The devotional fervour of the assembled worshippers was fanned into a flame by the new hymns composed in the spirit of the Vaishnava *sankirtan*. Maharshi Devendra Nath had been invited to conduct the evening service, which he gladly consented to do. His presence added to the enthusiasm of the devotional exercises, and the younger party sang and danced around him in a devotional frenzy which filled the mind of the old-leader with surprise. He too danced with them. This whole-day festival may be justly regarded as the public inauguration of the *Bhakti* or devotional movement in the Brahmo Samaj, which had such strange developments within a short time. On this occasion a new form of divine service based mainly on the lines laid down by Devendra Nath in the Adi Brahmo Samaj liturgy but from which, almost all the Sanskrit texts of that liturgy were excluded, was used by Mr. Sen, which has since then been

used as the form of public service by the progressive sections of the Church.

On the occasion of the anniversary of the Brahmo Samaj, which fell on the 24th January 1868, Mr. Sen laid the foundation stone of his *mandir*, now called the Tabernacle of the New Dispensation. On that day another Vaishnava mode of propagation, namely a singing procession through the streets, was also first introduced. Early in the morning, before the glorious sunbeams had scarcely pierced through the dewy vestures of retreating night, the voice of the new band of singers was heard in the streets. The following is a translation of the hymn with which they tried to rouse their fellow-townsmen from their sleep on that day :—

“ Come, O ye brethren ! now at last the night of our sorrows is about to depart, the name of God rises up in the town.

“ Sing all ye the name of God with joy, sing, and sorrow will be gone and peace will take possession of your souls.

“ To grant salvation the merciful God has sent his new faith of Brahmoism. Lo ! the gates of salvation are wide open. He calls one and all, entrance through his gate is free ; no one ever returns disappointed ; the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, all are equally welcome there.

"Men and women of all classes have an equal right ; whoever truly loves God the same shall be saved, there is no caste distinction here.

"To end the days of error and superstition, of sin and darkness, lo ! a heavenly faith has come upon earth ; come ye all who are willing to cross the ocean of existence free of charge. Come hastening on, this time there is no fear, for it is the great God himself who is the direct saviour.

"With your whole hearts seek ye the grace of God alone, be not absorbed in the transitory pleasures of this life.

"O let us fly—no use delaying,—let us fly to the shelter of him, who is the Lord of the lowly heart. See him as the Lord enthroned in your hearts, and your sufferings will be gone ; ye shall then attain consolation and through the mercy of the Lord ye shall be safe."

As the young reformers marched towards the site of the contemplated *mandir*, enthusiastically singing this characteristic hymn, many thousands of the citizens of all classes flocked to the streets, through which the former passed, to witness the new Brahmo street procession. They were deeply impressed by the hymn, and also by the manner in which it was sung. It caused quite a sensation in Calcutta native society. The Anti-Brahmo journals came down upon it, as an imita-

tion of the contemptible Vaishnavas, and predicted the wreck of the whole movement in no distant time. The Adi Brahmo Samaj people condemned it as a degradation of Brahmoism from its high pedestal of dignity and as an exposure of it to popular contempt. Even in the ranks of the progressives themselves opinion was divided. Many of them regarded the new departure with many misgivings, and were not at all easy in their minds about the wisdom of it.

After laying the foundation stone of the new *mandir* in the presence of a numerous and enthusiastic congregation, Mr. Sen returned to a house on the Chitpore Road, where arrangements were ready for a whole-day festival as in previous November. The proceedings were throughout characterized by great enthusiasm. Every one of the preachers, singers as well as expounders, was fired by the spirit of the occasion. Mr. P. C. Mozoomdar preached a memorable sermon on divine mercy. Babu Navina Chandra Roy of Lahore conducted service in Hindi during mid-day and in the evening the large hall resounded with enthusiastic *sankirtan* led by Bijay Krishna Goswami and Trailokya Nath Sanyal. The day's proceedings concluded with an English lecture on "*Regenerating Faith*" delivered by Mr. Sen. The lecture was delivered in the

presence of Lord Lawrence, the Viceroy, and a number of distinguished Europeans, who could find entrance into the dense crowd with some difficulty. It was characterised as much by deep spiritual insight as by extraordinary eloquence.

The anniversary festival brought great spiritual refreshment to the progressive Brahmos, and they entered upon their mission operations with redoubled energy. Mr. Sen early conceived the plan of starting on a mission tour through the N.-W. Provinces. Previous to starting for that tour, he paid a visit to Santipur, the birth-place of his friend, Bijay Krishna Goswami, and the principal centre of Vaishnavism. Here he delivered in Bengali a lecture on *Bhakti* in which he showed his reverence for Chaitanya, the great prophet of Bengal. His lecture gave great satisfaction to the leaders of Vaishnavism at Santipur.

Soon after his return to Calcutta Mr. Sen started on his missionary tour in Behar and the North-Western Provinces, accompanied by his family and missionary friends. They first halted at Bhagalpore. From Bhagalpore they went to Monghyr, where Aghorenath Gupta had preceded them and had already communicated to many the new fervour.

From Monghyr Mr. Sen went to Bombay, where a Theistic Congregation under the name of

the *Prarthana Samaj* had been organised in 1867. In this tour he was accompanied by Rev. Bhai Traylokyā Nath Sanyal, the new singing missionary. This was Mr. Sen's second visit to Bombay. His fame had travelled before him and he was hailed by all classes, both European and Indian. He stayed in Bombay during this visit nearly for ten days and delivered some English lectures.

From Bombay he returned to Monghyr, stopping at Jabbalpore and Allahabad. Everywhere his visit infused new spirit into the small struggling bodies of fellow-believers.

He reached Monghyr towards the end of the second week of April, and on the 19th was held a whole-day festival, in imitation of the Calcutta festival of November, 1867. Monghyr was mightily shaken. Here there was a small Bengali colony, consisting mostly of the clerks belonging to the Jamalpore railway offices. Many of these young Bengalis were roused up by the sermons and discourses of Mr. Sen. There was an unusual ferment. Many began to seek instruction from the Brahmo preachers. Many gave up their evil ways and began to attend the Brahmo gatherings. There was a great spiritual upheaval.

From this scene of the coming revival Mr. Sen had to temporarily withdraw himself for a visit to Bankipore where by a pre-arrangement he was to

meet Lord Lawrence, the Governor-General, to confer with him on the subject of legalising Brahmo marriages. The meeting took place in the beginning of May and Mr. Sen stayed there till the last week of that month, preaching *Bhakti*, holding conversational meetings and delivering lectures. On the 23rd of May a whole-day Brahmo festival was held at Bankipore and soon after Mr. Sen returned to Monghyr, where he had left his family. On the 7th of June another Brahmo festival was held in Monghyr, when a large number of people were publicly initiated into Brahmoism.

Now were the flood-gates of a new revival opened. A new passion for *Bhakti* seized men and women. In utter self-abasement men began to prostrate themselves at each other's feet and specially at the feet of Mr. Sen, and prayers were offered to him for intercession on behalf of sinners. Men ran mad, as it were, in their spiritual agony, not knowing what they said and did. Public services began to be disturbed by the cries, sobs, and lamentations of penitent sinners.

From the scene of these excesses Mr. Sen had to run back to Calcutta in the beginning of July to hold a special meeting of the Brahmo Samaj of India, for applying to Government for an Act legalising Brahmo marriages. The meeting was held on the 5th of July in the Calcutta College

when on the motion of Mr. A. M. Bose a resolution was adopted, pressing on the community the necessity of such an application, and a committee was appointed to carry that resolution into effect.

With that petition in his pocket Mr. Sen came back to Monghyr and started for Simla with his family and friends. This time his progress was marked by outbursts of great reverence for him everywhere, and by the paying to him by his immediate followers of almost superhuman honours. Babu Raj Narain Bose of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, who was then residing in the N.-W. Provinces, was shocked to see the manner in which the Brahmos prostrated themselves before Mr. Sen. He raised his voice of warning in a small pamphlet called "Brahmic Advice, Caution and Help"—from which I quote the following :—

"Brahmos should not regard the religious preachers as infallible and as having no defects in them. Some of them have never been heard in their lives to mark any mistake in what their teacher says or any defect in his character, but are invariably found to be full of blind admiration for him. He who believes that his teacher is not subject to mistake or has no defects in him is an idolator of the worst description."

"The right of private judgment is the most glorious privilege of a Brahmo as compared with the followers of other religions. Disciples should therefore show due veneration towards their teachers but should not make idols of them. The teacher again who reduces his disciples to mere automatons having no will or

judgment of their own, is not fit for the post of a religious instructor."

And again :

" Away for ever from the regions of Brahmoism, ye so-called Saviours, Mediators, Intercessors, Redeemers, Prophets. God-men, Incarnations, *et hoc genus omne* ! Welcome ye the Soul of the soul, the Almighty Father and Loving Mother of the universe ! "

The voice of warning thus publicly raised by the president of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, like the one privately expressed by some missionaries of Mr. Sen's own party, was apparently unheeded, and extravagant expressions of reverence, almost bordering upon worship, continued to be paid to him. The missionary party reached Simla in the middle of August and stayed there till the beginning of October. During his residence at Simla Mr. Sen had repeated conferences with Sir Henry Maine, then Legal Member of the Viceregal Council, who introduced in that Council, on the 20th September, a Bill entitled "*The Native Marriage Bill*" with the object of providing a form of civil marriage for all reformed bodies. Sir Henry Maine was obliged to give this general form to the measure, because he found upon enquiry from Mr. Sen that the word Brahmo did not admit of a clear definition.

After having settled the main lines of the measure, in consultation with the Legal Member, Mr. Sen descended into the plains, with the mis-

sionary party, in the beginning of October next and returned to Monghyr, visiting Lucknow and Benares on the way.

In Monghyr the re-appearance of Mr. Sen became the signal for a fresh outburst of extraordinary reverence for him. The rest may be told in Mr. Mozoomdar's words.

"They (the followers) professed uncommon reverence for him (Mr. Sen). They prostrated and abased themselves before him most utterly; they began to talk of him in extravagant phraseology such as "lord, master and saviour," so that all this soon provoked comment. It was just like the time of the advent of one of the great ancient prophets like Sakyamuni or Chaitanya, and Keshub was openly alluded to as such. Some professed to have seen supernatural sights concerning him; some connected him with Jesus, as the elder and younger sons of the Father; others composed and sang hymns about him in the following style :—

"Awake, Oh, inmates of the neighbourhood awake, there has come in your midst a Yogi, a lover of Brahma, full of tenderness.

"His throat always glorifies Hari and his heart is the abode of the perfect God."

One man went so far, as it was reported at the time, as to wash the feet of Mr. Sen with his own hands and to wipe them with the long hairs of his wife. The following was the upshot of this extraordinary manifestation of reverence, as related by his biographer :—

"Such sudden development of personal reverence alarmed a number of Brahma spectators, and among them, two well-known Brahma missionaries, who hitherto had been warmly attached to Keshub. One of these was Pundit Bijoy Krishna Goswami. They

wrote to some of the newspapers, formally brought the charge of worshipping Keshub against their fellow-disciples, and they unreservedly accused Keshub of conniving at, if not directly encouraging, it. They said they had made many private remonstrances against these practices, but without effect, nay, their protests had only provoked a greater persistency in the extravagances they found it their duty to condemn. They stirred up a considerable amount of public agitation, and succeeded in producing much ill-feeling against Keshub and his friends."

The letter of protest signed by the two missionaries, Babus Jadunath Chakraverty and Bijay Krishna Goswami, appeared in the public papers in October, 1868. The non-Brahmo press of Bengal, which was not at all favourably disposed towards the Brahmo cause, at once took up the cry of "man-worship in the Brahmo Samaj," and began to pour abuse on Mr. Sen and his followers; to which Mr. Sen made no reply and maintained throughout a dignified silence. For some months after this the whole country from one end to the other rang with the charge of man-worship. The sterner sort amongst the Brahmos, in whom the element of individuality was strong and who had imbibed in a larger measure the spirit of western culture than their fellows, felt disgusted at these proceedings and urgently demanded from Mr. Sen an explanation of the part he bore in these proceedings, by silently acquiescing in what his followers did to him. Why did he not, they sternly asked, tear his

garment and fly and say "rise up, I am also a man," as some of the Christian apostles did under similar circumstances. Mr. Sen's attitude will be best realised from the reply which he gave to Babu Thakurdas Sen, an old Brahmo, in the course of a letter addressed to him next year :—

"I have never approved of the manner in which some of my friends honour me * * * I have repeatedly expressed my hesitation to receive such honours. But I have no right to interfere with the freedom of others. It has ever been against my taste and conviction to bring men to do what I like by command or entreaties."

Mr. Sen's reply appeared in a pamphlet which Babu Thakurdas Sen published soon after under the heading, *The Refutation of the Arguments of the Opponents of Bhakti*. The reply partly served to allay the internal agitation for the time being, but it did not give entire satisfaction to all sections of the Brahmo community. Bijay Krishna once more returned to Mr. Sen ; but the other missionary did not ; whereas not a few members of the Samaj, who lost faith in the future prospects of the movement, left it altogether from this time.

The Brahmos once more settled down to carry on their work of reform. But from this time onward a spirit of distrust in the tendencies of Mr. Sen, and those of his close followers, was created in the minds of many a Brahmo, and the

voice of protest began to be heard from time to time. This is how Mr. Mozoomdar describes it :

“In fact henceforth in the Brahmō Samaj there were two strong parallel parties always present, one of whom honoured Keshub almost to the point of worship ; and the other consistently undervalued him, suspected his principles, and denied him his true position. *Of these two parties Keshub unreservedly preferred and trusted the former. The latter he was strongly inclined to accuse of rationalism and infidelity.*” *

By the beginning of 1869, the new Church building of the progressive party had made considerable progress ; and the anniversary service of that year was held within its walls, under a temporary roof.

Soon after the anniversary festival Mr. Sen once more visited Dacca, holding conversational and other meetings, delivering lectures and conducting divine service in several places. On his way back he visited Santipore, where Pandit Bijay Krishna Goswami, who had separated himself from the progressive party after his man-worship protest, was then residing. All the details of this conference between the leader and his right-hand associate is not known ; but it was found that in the course of a few weeks after this Bijay Krishna made a public recantation of his protest, as a thing done under misconception and returned to mission work under Mr. Sen.

* The italics are mine.

After the public recantation of Bijay Krishna Goswami, as an act of formal reconciliation with him, a party of Brahmos headed by Mr. Sen visited, in July next, a place called Kalieghata Kuthie, near Ranaghat, where Bijay Krishna Goswami was then residing, to conduct the *namakaran* i.e. name-giving ceremony of his son and to hold a festival there. This festival was very refreshing to the spirits of those who attended it.

At about this time the *Sangat Sabha*, which had ceased to exist since the days of the schism, was revived and a new batch of young men from the colleges joined it.

It was at this time that a telegram was received from Mr. Arsappa of Mangalore, a town in the Malabar coast, calling for a missionary visit, and Babus P. C. Mozoomdar, Gour Govinda Roy and Amritlal Bose were sent out in response to the invitation, and as the result of their visit a Brahmo Samaj was established at Mangalore.

After having restored harmony to his Church, Mr. Sen proceeded to consecrate his newly constructed chapel. The ceremony took place on the 22nd of August, 1869. A special whole-day festival was held in the *mandir* on that occasion, when Mr. Sen read out the following declaration of the principles of the new church :—

“Today, by Divine Grace, the public worship of God is

instituted in these premises for the use of the Brahmo community. Every day, at least every week, the Only God without a second, the Perfect and Infinite, the Creator of all, Omnipresent, Almighty, All-Knowing, All-Merciful, and All-Holy shall be worshipped in these premises. No created object shall be worshipped here, no man or inferior being or material object shall be worshipped here, as identical with God or like unto God or as an incarnation of God ; and no prayer or hymn shall be offered, or chanted in the name of any except God. No carved or painted image, no external symbol which has been or may hereafter be used by any sect for the purpose of worship, or the remembrance of any particular event shall be preserved here. No creature shall be sacrificed here ; neither eating nor drinking nor any manner of mirth or amusement shall be allowed here. No created being or object that has been or may hereafter be worshipped by any sect shall be ridiculed or condemned in the course of the Divine Service to be conducted here. No book shall be acknowledged or revered as the infallible work of God ; yet no book which has been or may hereafter be acknowledged by any sect to be infallible shall be ridiculed or condemned. No sect shall be vilified, ridiculed or hated. No prayer, hymn, sermon or discourse to be delivered or used here shall countenance or encourage any manner of idolatry, sectarianism or sin. Divine service shall be conducted here in such a spirit or manner as may enable all men and women, irrespective of distinction of caste and colour and condition, to unite in one family, eschew all manner of error and sin and advance in wisdom, faith and righteousness. The congregation of the Brahmo Mandir of India shall worship God in these premises according to the rules and principles hereinbefore set forth."

It will be seen that in the above mentioned declaration Mr. Sen kept close to the principles laid down by Rajah Ram Mohun Roy.

During the evening service on that day 21 young

men, some of them the flowers of the Calcutta University, were publicly initiated into Brahmoism. It was the first public ceremony of its kind ever held in the progressive section of the Church. It was meant as an object lesson to Mr. Sen's detractors, who had been talking of his waning influence and it was understood by all as such. It was properly speaking the formal spiritual inauguration of progressive Brahmoism and as such it roused the opposition of the public press of Bengal, which from this time took a decided attitude of hostility to this advanced section of the Brahmo Samaj. On the other hand the agitation spread to other parts of the world, and letters of sympathy and congratulation were received from all lovers of liberal religion in England and America.

Towards the end of that year Mr. Sen once more visited Dacca to consecrate the newly built *Mandir* of that place. His visit stirred up a new spirit and a large number of young men were publicly initiated into Brahmoism. Thus, after a period of trial and depression, progressive Brahmoism was started afresh, both in Western and in Eastern Bengal, on a career of conquering energy.

In the beginning of 1870, Mr. Sen carried out a long cherished idea of his, namely that of visiting England. The announcement came as a surprise even to his personal friends. The arrange-

ments, were hastily got up for his departure. He delivered a farewell address in the Town Hall, where collections were made for the intended voyage. He made over to Mr. P. C. Mozoomdar the charge of the congregation, with the casket and the seal which he had received as insignia of his office, as minister, from old Devendra Nath. He held repeated meetings with his immediate friends and gave them important expositions of some of the vexed questions of Brahmo doctrines, such, for instance, as the reverence for religious teachers, &c. At one of these conversational meetings Mr. Sen compared a prophet or a great man to a pair of spectacles, whose main function was to strengthen the spiritual vision of the devotee, and not to obstruct it ; he also compared a great teacher to the door-keeper, who leads a new-comer to the master within and then vanishes from sight and never stands between. Let me quote his utterances about the position of a *guru* or spiritual preceptor, from the book of Mr. P. C. Mozoomdar :—

“ In the Progress of Life, no single individual can be a complete spiritual guide (*guru*). He may be a help, but never the goal. Every man is a guide in proportion his life and precepts help us on the way to spirituality. Speaking of living guides, my own case forcibly comes into view. Those who think they have derived any benefit from me ought to give me reverence. But it is just the same in regard to the other missionaries also. From what I have taught, or am now teaching, or may teach in future, I cannot call

any man my exclusive disciple. This to me is a matter of special rejoicing. There cannot be between myself and others the exact relationship of teacher and disciple. Any one calling me his only teacher may find obstacles on his way to salvation. He who accepts and follows all the ideas in my mind might be called my disciple. But even in that case he ought to believe that it is not I, but my God who is his real guide. If a man on listening to four or five precepts given by me calls me his *guru*, he is guilty of untruth. If any man gives me greater reverence than he gives God, it is the weakness of his faith. I never believe I teach a single thing of religion to any man. It is the object of my life to draw my brethren before the presence of my God. He will teach them directly, may my personality never stand between. He who, according to my advice, seeks the solution of every difficulty directly from God alone, is my true disciple. Those who profess to love me, but do not love the brethren whom I have brought here, speak falsehood."

After having communicated his last instructions to his friends, and having made all necessary arrangements for his family and his work, Mr. Sen left for England on the 15th of February, 1870. He reached London on the 21st of March, stayed in England till the 17th of September, and returned to Calcutta on the 20th of October next.

He was fully occupied during his English visit. His eloquence soon attracted public notice and he was lionised by all classes, Her Majesty the Queen Empress not excepted. A welcome soiree was got up by his admirers in the Hanover Square Rooms, on the 12th of April, in which

leading men of all parties, such as Lord Lawrence, three or four members of Parliament, Dr. Cappel, the Roman Catholic Father, Dean Stanley, the Broad Churchman, Dr. James Martineau, the Unitarian minister, Rev. Stopford Brooke, a Minister of the Church of England, the Venerable Dr. Marks, the patriarch of the Jewish Church, and Dr. Mullens of the London Missionary Society, took part.

After this the career of Mr. Sen in England was something like a triumphal march. He was courted by all classes; preached from many Unitarian and Congregational pulpits; delivered speeches at meetings of the Peace Society, the Ragged School Union, Temperance Societies, and the Swedenborg Society. He breakfasted with Mr. Gladstone, then Prime Minister. He delivered two lectures, the first on *England's Duties to India* and the second on *Christ and Christianity*. The first was delivered at the Metropolitan Tabernacle of Rev. Charles Spurgeon under the presidency of Lord Lawrence. That lecture, in which he pointed out some of the shortcomings of the Anglo-Indian rulers of this country, gave great offence to the Anglo-Indian community here. The second lecture was delivered on the 28th of May in the St. James Hall and evoked warm appreciation. In it Mr. Sen explained his views of the mission of Christ, and pointed out the

contrast between the Christ of the Gospels and the Christ of the Christian Church, trying to show the superiority of the former over the latter.

After this he visited some provincial towns, such as Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Stratford-on-Avon, whither he made a pilgrimage to the grave of Shakespear. Everywhere he left a deep impression on all who met him and listened to him. His unostentatious piety and simplicity of manners evoked general applause and men hung on his words with wonder and admiration.

He returned to London and was honoured with an interview with the sovereign. On the 12th of September another soiree was held in the Hanover Square Rooms to bid him farewell. He left England on the 17th September, returning to India loaded with honours and good wishes.

The welcome that Mr. Sen received from his friends and countrymen on his arrival at Calcutta on the 20th October was proportionate to the great success of his tour in England. A large crowd went out in a special steamer to receive him at the Howrah station. Great was the enthusiasm when the leader stepped out of his carriage and once more faced his friends. Within a few days the male members of his congregation met him at a garden party in the suburbs of

Calcutta and presented him with an address of welcome ; which example was also soon followed by the ladies.

Maharshi Devendra Nath also accorded a warm welcome to Mr. Sen upon his return ; and for a few days there was a talk of probable co-operation between the two leaders. But ultimately the breach was further widened by an unhappy incident. Upon the invitation of Mr. Sen, Devendra Nath agreed to occupy the pulpit of the *Bharat-barshiya Brahma Mandir* on the 10th of Magh, 1871. In his sermon he spoke rather strongly against the pro-Christian tendencies of Keshub and of the progressive party, which gave great offence to the latter and a protest signed by 62 progressive Brahmos was sent to him, thereby widening the gulf of separation.

After his return to India Mr. Sen proceeded to put to practice some of the ideas that he had imbibed during his English visit. The first practical step that he took in that direction was the formation of the *Indian Reform Association*, on the 29th October (1870), of which he was elected president and which, though including many non-Brahmos amongst its members, represented in fact the secular side of Brahma life during this period, and was carried on mainly by his missionaries and other members of his congregation.

The work of the Association was divided into five departments : (1) Charity, (2) Female Education, (3) Technical and General Education, (4) Temperance, and (5) Cheap Literature.

Under the first head, something like a sub-committee was organised, in which Pandit Bijay Krishna Goswami figured prominently, for rendering medical aid to the sufferers from malarious fever, which had broken out at the time, in all its virulence, in the southern suburbs of Calcutta. These gentlemen carried on the work entrusted to them with so much zeal and self-sacrifice, that it evoked universal admiration, and contributions poured in from all classes of society. Bijay Krishna worked so hard in this connection that he permanently undermined his health and remained almost an invalid ever since.

Under the second head an adult female school, recruited largely from the wives and daughters of Brahmos, was opened, where education was freely imparted in all the important secular branches of knowledge. This School was kept up for some years. There Mr. Sen made an experiment of his ideas of female education, which however differed in many respects from those entertained by the most advanced section of progressive Brahmoism, as will be recorded hereafter.

Under the third head, a night school for the

education of the working classes and also for the industrial education of the middle classes was opened, but it was soon given up ; the efforts of the Association in this direction having been subsequently confined to the maintenance of a higher class English school for boys of the middle class. This school had been originally started by Babu Haranath Bose, a member of Mr. Sen's congregation, under the name of the *Calcutta School* and after many unpleasant incidents and disagreeable discussions, in which the original proprietor charged the leaders of the Samaj with misappropriation of his property, was finally taken up by the *Indian Reform Association* as a part of its work. This school, the name of which was afterwards changed into the Albert College, was placed in charge of Mr. Sen's late brother, Krishna Behari Sen, who carried it on during his life-time, leaving it to his children after his death.

Under the department of Temperance, a monthly Bengali journal called *Mad na garal*, (*Wine or Poison*) was started, under the editorial management of the present writer, and kept up for a few years ; and lectures and discussions were got up from time to time. It must here be stated that Mr. Sen's interest in the temperance cause was of long standing. He had given his adherence to

it in the early sixties, when Babu Peary Charan Sircar, our great temperance reformer, first raised the standard. Mr. Sen also made common cause with the temperance reformers in England. And even after the collapse of the *Indian Reform Association* he upheld it by organising Bands of Hope amongst children. The Brahmo Samaj owes its character as a body pledged to temperance chiefly to Mr. Sen, for which certainly we owe him a debt of gratitude.

The success of the Cheap Literature Section was surprising. The *Sulabh Samachar*, i.e. the *Cheap News*, the first one-pice paper in the country, was started by the Association and met with unprecedented success. It was the fore-runner of an era of cheap journalism in this country, which is now an established institution. After having faithfully fulfilled its mission as a pioneer, it has been incorporated with another paper and has passed into other hands.

Side by side with these new activities, the years 1871 and 1872 witnessed a deeply interesting agitation on another important subject. It was the passing of Act III of 1872. Let me go back a little to give a short history of marriage reform in the Brahmo Samaj.

Brahmo marriages, according to a reformed ritual from which the idolatrous portions of

orthodox Hindu ritual were expunged, began to be celebrated from July 1861, as has already been described. Since then the number of reformed marriages began to multiply and almost every year witnessed the celebration of one or two of them. In 1862 Devendra Nath's third son's marriage took place according to the reformed rites. In 1863 took place the marriages of Maharshi's fourth son and third daughter. But in 1864 the younger party introduced a bold innovation by getting Parvati Charan Das, one of their party, married to an accomplished widowed girl of a different caste. This occasioned a difference, as has been already stated, between Devendra Nath and the younger party. The progressives seceded in November, 1866. In December next an inter-marriage took place between Babu Prasanna Kumar Sen and Srimati Raj Lakshmi Maitra. The ritual used in this connection was not the Adi Brahmo Samaj one. It was shorn of many features that the progressives considered unnecessary and in the place of *Sampradan* or the gift of the bride, mutual vows were introduced, thus making the ceremony more Western than Eastern. The progressive marriages, including the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj ones, have since been celebrated mainly on the lines laid down then. In 1868 the question of the legal validity of the reformed marriages was raised

by the Brahmo Samaj of India and the opinion of the Advocate-General was secured, who declared the marriages celebrated according to the rituals submitted to him to be legally invalid. Thereupon another meeting of the Samaj was held on the 5th of July, 1868, and it was resolved to memorialize Government. The result was Mr. Sen's visit to Simla and the introduction by Sir Henry Maine of a Bill, called the *Native Marriage Bill*, in the Viceregal Council. It provided a civil form of marriage and made it of general application to all non-Christians who objected to be married according to any of the current religious forms. As such the Bill met with violent opposition from the Hindu members of the Council and soon after from the landholders of Bengal, from the Benares Pandits, and from the Hindus and Parsees of Bombay, all of whom were afraid that the proposed law would encourage heterodox unions amongst their communities. Two years were wasted by the Select Committee in considering the measure. In the meanwhile reformed marriages began to multiply in all parts of the country, one taking place in Bombay in 1870 between Mr. Basudev Babaji Nowrangay and Mrs. Krishna Bai, a young widow. In 1871 one such marriage was celebrated at Lucknow and another at Madras.

Mr. Fitzjames Stephen, the Law Member

who succeeded Sir H. Maine, modified the Bill, after receiving Select Committee's report in March, 1871, into one intended exclusively for Brahmos under the name of *The Brahmo Marriage Bill*. But at this stage also it met with strenuous opposition from the members of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, who contended (1) that Brahmo marriages, by which they meant marriages celebrated under the ritual of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, were quite as valid as the marriages of other reformed Hindus ; (2) that the proposed law contemplated a civil form of registration which was revolting to Hindu ideas ; (3) that the preamble of the Bill would lead outsiders to suppose that all Brahmos, including themselves, were for legislation, which was not the fact ; (4) that the passing of the Act would inevitably tend to separate the Brahmos from the Hindu community, and draw a line of demarcation between Brahmos and Hindus, whereas according to their view Brahmos were Hindus, and Brahmoism was a form of Hinduism. Thus the two parties, the Adi Brahmos and the progressives, were once more placed face to face in the arena of a sharp controversy. Mr. Sen addressed a circular letter to the leading pandits of Bengal asking for their opinion on the validity or otherwise of the rituals adopted at Brahmo marriages, both by the Adi Samaj men and the progressives ; and almost

all of them declared such marriages to be invalid in the eye of the Hindu law. The members of the Adi Samaj also sought opinions of distinguished pandits in their favour. Thus an agitation was kicked up leading to bitter controversy.

During this period of party struggle Babu Raj Narain Bose delivered a lecture under the presidency of Devendra Nath Tagore on "The Superiority of Hinduism over all other forms of faith." By Hinduism he meant the higher form of it, forming the creed of the Adi Brahmo Samaj. The lecture created some sensation at the time and was reported in *The Times* of England. Nor were the progressives idle. They got up counter lectures under the presidency of Mr. Sen, in which they gave reasons which stood in the way of regarding the Brahmos as genuine Hindus. One of these reasons was their non-belief in the infallibility of the Vedas. Thus the Marriage controversy developed itself in side-issues and there was an interminable discussion. The opinions of the two classes of pandits also, namely those in favour of the Adi Samaj and of the progressive views, furnished much matter for heated discussion which created bad blood in the ranks of their members.

One good however came out of these controversies. The legal insecurity of the reformed

marriages was made manifest. One of the contested points in the controversy was the proper marriageable age of Indian girls. Mr. Sen at once set himself to work to settle that point. In April 1871, as president of the Indian Reform Association, he addressed a circular letter to some of the leading medical authorities in the country, both European and Indian, asking for a statement of their opinion on the subject. The majority of these gentlemen declared sixteen to be the minimum marriageable age of our girls. The following table, which I take from Miss Collet's *Brahmo Year Book*, will give the reader an idea of these opinions :—

Name	Minimum age	Proper age
Dr. Chandra K. Day	14	
„ Charles	14	
„ Nabin K. Bose	15	18
Dr. A. V. White (Bombay)	15 or 16	18
„ Mohendra Lal Sircar	16	
„ Tumiz Khan Bahadur	16	
„ Dr. Norman Chevers	16	18
„ D. B. Smith	16	18 or 19
„ Ewart	16	18 or 19
„ Fayrer	16	18 or 20
„ S. G. Chakraverty	16	21
„ Atmaram Pandurung	20	

In a public speech delivered shortly after, Mr.

Sen summed up their conclusions in the following terms :—

“Thirdly, we contemplate the abolition of early or premature marriages. There has always been a large amount of uncertainty and doubt in the public mind as to the minimum marriageable age of native girls. Reference was therefore made a few months ago to the leading medical authorities in Calcutta and what is the result? It has been what we had anticipated. The medical authorities in Calcutta almost unanimously declared that 16 is the minimum marriageable age of girls in this country. Dr. Charles makes a valuable suggestion. He holds that 14 being the commencement of adolescence may for the present be regarded as the minimum age at which native girls may be allowed to marry and may serve as a starting point for reform in this direction. In conformity with the suggestion and the opinion given by the other referees, we have come to the conclusion that for the present at least it would be expedient to follow the provision in the Bill which makes 14 the minimum marriageable age of girls in this country ; leaving it in the hands of time to develop this reform slowly and gradually into maturity and fulness.”

Fourteen was accordingly laid down by Sir James Stephen as the minimum marriageable age of girls in the new Bill which he prepared for submission to the Legislative Council on 16th January, 1872. Even at this stage the passing of the Act was further delayed by reference to the Provincial Governments and also by the assassination of Lord Mayo, the Governor-General of the time, in the Andaman islands. Lord Napier, the Governor of Madras, took temporary charge of the Governor-Generalship and under him the

measure was finally brought forward on the 19th of March, 1872, and three days later was passed into law as Act III of 1872.

The passing of this Act may be justly regarded as the crowning success of the prolonged efforts of the reformers for the amelioration of their social life. It abolished early marriage, made polygamy penal, sanctioned widow marriages and inter-caste marriages. As such it was hailed with a shout of joy by the progressives ; but ever since it has been one of the principal causes that have alienated the Brahmos from the sympathies of their orthodox countrymen. Its negative declaration, consequent upon the Act being intended for parties not coming under any of the existing marriage laws and not professing any of the current faiths, has given great offence to our Hindu countrymen, from amongst whom the present members of the Brahmo Samaj are largely recruited.

To resume the thread of my narrative : in February 1871, Mr. Sen opened a novel institution called the *Bharat Ashram*, literally the Indian Hermitage, but practically a joint Family House, where a number of Brahmo families were invited to live together, boarding together in the fashion of a joint family, each bearing its portion of the expenses and sharing in common the

spiritual and educational advantages of the institution. The main object of the *Ashram* was to introduce ideas of religious and moral discipline into Brahmo families : to train them to ideas of neatness, order, punctuality and domestic devotions, which form such striking features in a well-regulated middle-class English home. The instruments for carrying out that object were near at hand. Mr. Sen's devoted missionaries with their families were ready to try every experiment that he proposed. They were the first to respond to his call ; but others also came forward to reside in the *Ashram* with their families. All these families formed as it were one family, boarding and praying together daily. Mr. Sen with his wife and children was with them in the *Ashram* for some-time and personally supervised its affairs.

(The previously mentioned adult female school, to which a normal class was subsequently added, was located in the *Ashram* premises and, indeed, formed a part of that institution. Here the wives and grown up daughters of the lodgers of the *Ashram* formed the majority of the pupils, and the majority of the teachers were recruited from amongst the male lodgers of that institution.

But the course of the *Ashram* was not without its bitter experiences. Unbrotherliness and discord soon broke out amongst the lodgers and in

1874, one of the families had to leave the institution under rather painful circumstances, which gave rise to much adverse criticism in the public press and to such foul attacks on the part of one paper, that Mr. Sen felt himself obliged to institute a suit for libel against the offending journal, to preserve the good name of his institution. The libellers publicly apologised in court and the case was withdrawn.

The *Ashram* soon began to decline and it was removed from the large house it occupied in the suburbs of Calcutta in 1874, to 13 Mirzapore Street, the old family dwelling house of Mr. Sen's missionaries. In the beginning of 1876 we find Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar, the ablest of Mr. Sen's missionaries, complaining in the following terms :—
“ we cannot say that the *Bharat Ashram* has made any progress during the last year.” It nominally existed for two or three years more ; after which it seems to have died a natural death.

The renewed activity of Mr. Sen after his return from England was visible in other departments of work also.

From the month of July of that year (1871) the old *Brahmo School* was once more revived. Mr. Sen began to give regular courses of lectures and to hold periodical examinations. Such works as Tulloch's “Theism,” Morell's “Philosophy of Religion,” MacCosh's “Intuitions,” Cousin's “History of

Philosophy", Butler's "Analogy" and the New Testament, formed the text-books of these periodical examinations. Young men from the colleges once more began to flock to these lectures. But this institution also ceased to exist within a few years.

The *Sangat Sabha* which had done such important work in the past, but which in course of time had fallen into a moribund condition, was also now revived. A large number of young men from the colleges once more joined it; and its discussions began to be regularly published in the form of a journal called "*Dharma Sadhan*" or "Religious Culture" from 1872, under the editorial charge of Babu Umesh Chandra Datta, the well-known editor of the *Bama Bodhini Patrika* and for a long time the Principal of the City College. It was kept up till 1875.

In August, 1872, Mr. Sen organised his missionaries into a body called the *Brahmo Missionary Conference*, of which he was president and which exercised its spiritual authority over all the affairs of the church.

During this period also the ladies residing in the *Bharat Ashram*, with the help and co-operation of ladies from outside, established a society of their own, where they would meet for the reading of papers written by themselves and also for the delivery of lectures by their male friends.

The old Brahmo institution, the *Society of Theistic Friends*, was also revived during this period and, though irregular in its mode of working, held several meetings during these years of renewed activity.

One more institution worthy of notice during this period was the *Brahmo Niketan*. It was a Brahmo students' lodging, conducted very nearly on the plan of the *Bharat Ashram* and presided over by one of the missionaries of Mr. Sen. This institution was started in 1873, but had to be given up in the course of two or three years.

Indeed, the activity of Mr. Sen after his return from England seemed to be unbounded. From 1871 he converted the *Indian Mirror* into a daily paper, perhaps the first English daily conducted by natives of the country ; and this involved hard work on his part and that of his able assistant, Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar. Besides that an annual Brahmo almanac began to be published from that year, and a yearly magazine called the *Brahmo Annual* was also launched into being at about that time. Mr. Sen's zeal for propagation was also equally great during these years. Between 1871 and 1876, he visited more than once the N. W. Provinces and the Punjab, rousing up interest in the cause of Brahmoism everywhere.

All these plainly showed the great ardour with which Mr. Sen threw himself into his new work from 1871. New energy took possession of his soul ; and new success seemed to be waiting for him. But side by side with the signs of renewed activity there were other signs, less visible on the surface, that indicated that the seeds of discontent and discord had already been sown and were silently growing. Mr. Sen no longer represented all sections of the progressive church and many of his sayings and doings began to be subjected to criticism by the younger section of the Samaj.

The first note of discord was sounded in 1871, when some members of his congregation, who were then styled the female-emancipationists in the Brahmo Samaj, demanded the right of sitting with their wives and daughters amongst the general congregation, outside the screen reserved for ladies. The demand was strongly opposed by Mr. Sen's missionaries and friends on the ground that the experiment was a novel and a risky one, and would be resented by the general body of the male portion of the congregation. But the promoters of the female emancipation movement had no disposition to listen to such arguments and two of them, namely, the late Dr. Annoda Charan Khastagir and the late Babu Durga Mohun Das, in open defiance of the missionary

protest, actually began to sit in the midst of the general congregation with their families, in exercise of their right of membership. This gave rise to a storm ; the missionaries came down upon the female-emancipationists in their papers. The latter, however, remained firm and temporarily seceded from Mr. Sen's congregation and established a weekly service of their own, in another part of the town, where Maharshi Devendra Nath, upon their special invitation, encouraged them by himself conducting the inaugural service. They also obtained the sympathies of some other advanced Brahmos who at times joined their services. This secessionist service they maintained till June, 1872. A reconciliation was then effected between Mr. Sen's party and the seceders, by the former agreeing to provide reserved seats for ladies who wanted to sit outside the screen.

But though peace was outwardly restored, perfect harmony was far from being established between the conflicting parties. Their differences on the subject of female education and female emancipation were such as were incapable of easy settlement. The emancipationists had very little faith in Mr Sen's ideas of female education. They regarded them as conservative and narrow ; whereas Mr. Sen on his part looked upon their

ideas of female education as tending to unsex women and their idea of female emancipation as highly revolutionary and fraught with grave danger to society. Mr. Sen had a strong prejudice against university education, in fact, against what is generally regarded as high education, of women. He objected to teaching them, for instance, such subjects as Mathematics, Philosophy and Science, whereas the advanced party positively wanted to give their daughters and sisters what is generally regarded as high education. They did not object to their university education and were not disposed to make much difference in point of education between men and women. There was no hope of compromise between two such extreme schools of thought. Accordingly, the radical party proceeded to start a separate female school of their own, called the *Hindu Mahila Vidyalaya*, for the education of the adult young ladies belonging to their party. The successful manner in which they carried on the work of this school under Miss Akroyd, subsequently Mrs. Beveridge, attracted much public notice and was highly praised by the officers of Government. This school did excellent work for many years and was subsequently conducted under the name of the *Banga Mahila Vidyalaya* and was at last amalgamated with the Bethune

College for ladies, to which it furnished some of its most distinguished students.

In connection with this scheme of the high education of women three names deserve honourable mention ;—namely, those of Messrs. A. M. Bose, D. M. Das and D. N. Ganguli. The first two supplied the sinews of war ; they bore the expenses of the institution ; whereas Mr. D. N. Ganguli was the principal organiser, the chief executive agent, on whom rested the whole practical work. Along with Miss Akroyd he laboured day and night to make the institution a success. He was a man of ideas. Even from his village home, at Vikrampur, in the Dacca district, at a time when he was not known to fame, and was eking out a paltry subsistence as a village school-master, he had raised his voice for the elevation of woman-kind and had started a journal called *Abala Bandhab* or the “ Woman’s Friend”. With that journal in his hands, and his ideas in his head, he had travelled to Calcutta to give practical shape to his ideas in a larger field. This was the man who now gave himself entirely for the promotion of his cherished object. Miss Akroyd, who formed perhaps one of the first batch of lady students of Girton College, in England, opportunely arrived just then and lent her services quite willingly for the new venture.

There was another party of independent thinkers in the Church at this time who worked in another direction. What the female-emancipationists did in matters relating to female education, they wanted to do in matters of theology and church government. All the men who formed this party were men who had shared with Mr. Sen and his missionaries all the bitter trials and persecutions of the early days of progressive Brahmoism ; and many of them were long connected with the practical work of the Brahmo Samaj, in Bengal, and in other parts of the country. Many of them had lived together with Mr. Sen in the *Bharat Ashram*. These men were alarmed at two things. First, the rather over-accentuation of the principle of hero-worship amongst his missionaries ; secondly, the want of constitutional forms and methods in the management of the affairs of the Church. For a time, they earnestly carried on private discussions with Mr. Sen and his missionaries. But private discussion proving ineffectual, as in the case of the man-worship agitation alluded to before, they proceeded to organise themselves into a small party of opposition, known at that time as the *Samadarshi party*, and started in November, 1874, a monthly magazine called *Samadarshi* or the *Liberal*, for the discussion of such matters as

they deemed necessary for the good of the Church.

The journal was placed under the editorial charge of the present writer. The Samadarshi party drew to itself, besides the present writer, many men well-known in the Brahmo Samaj, such as, Pandit Navina Chandra Roy of Lahore, and Babus Kedar Nath Roy, Nagendra Nath Chatterjee, Jadu Nath Chakraverty, Kali Nath Datta and D. N. Ganguli. Besides starting the journal they got up lectures on the need for constitutional government in the Brahmo Samaj, one of which, delivered by Babu Nagendra Nath Chatterji, called forth adverse criticism, from Mr. Sen himself, in the columns of the *Sunday Mirror*.

Faced by the new situation, five leading men of this party, decided to meet regularly for private prayer and for the earnest discussion of that situation. Maharshi Devendra Nath, apprised of their decision to discuss important questions in the light of earnest prayer, was highly pleased and gave them the name of *pancha pradip* or Five Lamps in the Temple of God. Accordingly, this small party delighted to call themselves "The Five Lamps."

The following is the history of the rise of the constitutional party. In the beginning of 1874 Babu Haranath Bose, the original proprietor of the Calcutta School, as noticed before, was living in

the *Bharat Ashram* with his family. He was very irregular in the payment of the *Ashram* charges. Pressure was naturally brought upon him by the *Ashram* manager for the regular payment of his dues. Failing to do so, one day he made up his mind to remove himself from the *Ashram*. Whilst leaving the house, he had still some outstanding debts, for which the carriage of his wife was stopped at the gate by the *Ashram* servant, apparently by order of the manager ; and the lady occupant had to part with a portion of her personal jewellery to help her husband out of his difficulties. This matter was noised abroad owing to the publication of a letter of the lady in a newspaper, describing the incident. The adversaries of the Brahmo Samaj, in the public press, found it to be their opportunity to create a scandal and let loose their antipathy in libelous attacks on Mr. Sen and the *Ashram* ; so much so that the former was at last compelled to seek the protection of a court of justice. A suit for defamation was instituted, which, however, was withdrawn upon the offenders making a public apology, as has been stated before. But the case though amicably settled out of court brought on internal troubles. The insult offered to a lady by the *Ashram* manager, through his servant, highly incensed a large portion of the Brahmo community of Calcutta. They demanded an ex-

planation from the offending missionary manager ; in reply to which they were told, that as laymen they had no right to judge duly ordained preachers, missionaries of the Samaj being responsible to God and to the Missionary Conference alone ; a position which the constitutionalists strongly repudiated.

Thus were launched into being the two conflicting parties, the *sacerdotalists* and the *secularists*, as Miss Collet named them at the time. The so-called secularists started the *Samadarshi* and commenced from time to time to agitate for the introduction of constitutional modes of self-government in the Church. Other questions, such as the doctrines of *Adesh*, or Divine command, and of " Great Men " and " Dispensation " also cropped up during the course of discussion, and the *Samadarshi* or the *Liberal* offered a convenient platform for such discussions.

From the year 1874 the constitutional party interested themselves in trying to organise the Calcutta congregation of the *Brahma Mandir* on principles of self-government. They sent in a letter of requisition to Mr. Sen to call a meeting of the members of the congregation for that purpose. A meeting was accordingly called and they proceeded to appoint a committee, and to take other steps for bringing the affairs of the congregation under constitutional control. But Mr. Sen seemed

to be afraid of the rising spirit and was loth to place the affairs of his Church entirely in the hands of the constitutionalists. He could not concede all that they wanted. So the arrangement arrived at was satisfactory neither to Mr. Sen and his friends nor to the other party ; the consequence being that the agitation was not productive of any lasting result.

The second thing to which the constitutionalists directed their attention was the question of placing the *Brahma Mandir* in the hands of a body of regularly appointed trustees. The chapel had been built by public subscriptions, to which many of them had contributed, and they were naturally anxious to vest the property in safe hands. But Mr. Sen urged that its debts stood in the way of its suggested transfer to any public trustees. That silenced the constitutionalists for the time being ; but they were far from being satisfied. Some of them felt very strongly on that subject ; specially Mr. A. M. Bose, who after his return from England in 1874, began to take an active interest in constitutional questions and lent the aid of his influence and support to the question of appointing trustees of the *Mandir*. But nothing could induce Mr Sen to place the *Mandir* in the hands of any trustees. Finding him standing firm on the question of the debts of the chapel, a number of the constitu-

tionalists came forward, at the conference of 1877, to take upon themselves those debts and publicly bound themselves to raise money and pay them ; but even then, Mr. Sen took time to see how far they would succeed in carrying out their promise. The close of this period of trial unfortunately never came ; for before that year was over the Samaj found itself in the throes of a second schism.

Baffled in their attempt to place the affairs of the congregation on a satisfactory footing the constitutionalists directed their attention to another object. They began to agitate for the introduction of methods of constitutional government in the management of the affairs of the Church in general. In their attempts to do so they fell back upon the old scheme of a Representative Assembly, once started by Mr. Sen himself, during the latter end of his connection with the Adi Brahmo Samaj. They brought forward a proposal for the formation of such an Assembly in 1876. Mr. Sen, who could not deny its reasonableness, gave his sanction to it and one or two meetings were held, during that year, in his house, to give practical effect to the scheme. But it did not make much progress during that year.

At the annual conference of the year 1877, a letter of requisition, signed by 35 Brahmos,

pointing out the necessity of taking some practical steps for the organization of a Representative Assembly was again submitted by the Samadarshi party. As a result of the discussion arising out of that letter, eight leading men of the community, namely, Babus Keshub Chunder Sen, Shib Chandra Deb, Durga Mohun Das, Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar, Siva Nath Sastri, Nagendra Nath Chatterji, Mr. A. M. Bose, and Dr. P. K. Ray, were appointed as a provisional committee to draw up a scheme for the organisation of such an Assembly and to submit it, at an early date, for the consideration of the community. A scheme was accordingly drawn up by this committee and published in the *Samadarshi* of April, 1877, and the *Sunday Mirror* of May 6th, of that year. A public meeting of the Brahmos of Calcutta was held in the *Brahma Mandir* on the 19th of May, to take into consideration the report prepared by the provisional committee. At this meeting the Representative Assembly was duly formed, the rules framed by the provisional committee were passed and an executive committee with Mr. Sen as President and Mr. A. M. Bose as Secretary and the present writer as Assistant Secretary was appointed. The Representative Assembly was instituted with the distinct provision that it would be only an auxiliary of the *Brahmo Samaj of India*

and not a body exercising control over its affairs. Its position as an auxiliary body was distinctly laid down by Mr. Sen and in fact that was the condition upon which he consented to aid the Samadarshi party in organising it. The latter accepted that condition as the first concession towards the introduction of the constitutional principle of government in the affairs of the church. Even under this limited scope its promoters began to work in right earnest. They confined their attention chiefly to five things :—(1) The collection of statistics, (2) The publication of books expository of Brahmoism, (3) The raising of funds for that purpose, (4) The preparation of a code of ceremonies for the Church, and (5) The raising of funds for the support of indigent Brahmos and Brahmo families.

On the 23rd of September, 1877, another general meeting of the *Pratinidhi Sabha* or Representative Assembly, was held, at which the representatives from 27 Provincial Samajes were present. The main work of the Assembly as shown above was divided between four sub-committees. But before the scheme could be fully carried out the Church became involved in the Kuch Behar marriage controversy, which I must now proceed to relate.

But the narrative of the closing years of the

Brahmo Samaj of India will not be complete without taking notice of some important developments of faith and religious life that took place during these years.

From the time of the foundation of the *Bharat Ashram* in 1871, two ideas became very prominent in the daily prayers of Mr. Sen ; first, that the movement, including the *Ashram*, which he headed and which he chiefly directed, was a special dispensation of Providence ; and secondly, that it should be accepted as such by all sincere lovers of God ; so much so, that the non-acceptance of this doctrine was visited by him with marked displeasure and it was also urged that what he said and did in connection with that movement were said and done by *adesh* or Divine command and that his friends were bound to accept them as such. The latter attitude gave rise to many discussions between Mr. Sen and the present writer, who at that time lived in the same house with him, and was daily present at those prayers and still has a distinct recollection of those utterances. It was pointed out to Mr. Sen that it was but proper that he should stick to the ideas he believed to be parts of a Divine revelation to himself, but it was unwise to blame others if they failed to realize them in that way. But he persisted in his course. Many of these discussions were

subsequently taken up in the pages of the *Samadarshi* or the *Liberal*.

From this time, too, we began to notice a great change in Mr. Sen. He began to be increasingly more and more self-assertive and decreasingly less and less appreciative of the difficulties and motives of those who differed from him. He openly charged the Samadarshi party men, as *secularists*, *infidels*, *rationalists*, *men of little faith*, and so on; and held them up to public contempt in the pages of the *Sunday Mirror*. The present writer publicly complained, in that journal, against such unfair and unbrotherly treatment; but failed to bring about any change in Mr. Sen's demeanour.

In 1875 Mr. Sen began to preach and practise asceticism. He then influenced his missionaries to cut down their allowances to a minimum limit and advocated the necessity of practising severe austerities.

It was not entirely the asceticism of the spirit that he inculcated at this time; for he countenanced, both by precept and example, some of the external forms of it. For instance, he himself gave up the use of metallic drinking cups, substituting earthen ones for them, his example being followed by many of the missionaries; he took to cooking his own food and constructed a little thatched kitchen on the terrace of the third story of his

Kalutolah house for that purpose ; and introduced the *ektara*, a rude kind of musical instrument and the mendicant's drinking bowl, well-known to a sect of Vaishnavas. The introduction of these peculiar forms evoked a strong protest from friends in England and various comments from the Brahmo public. Of course these forms and practices raised him immensely in the eyes of a section of his followers, who marked in them the signs of a true devotee, but others looked on without being much affected by them.

One thing, however, was remarkable. Along with the development of these tendencies there was visible a decline of the old philanthropic activities of the Samaj. The educational and other institutions started under the *Indian Reform Association*, for instance, began to decline from this time. Very great stress was laid on meditation and retirement from the world. With a view to giving practical effect to these ideas, Mr. Sen purchased a garden in the village of Morepukur, within a few miles of Calcutta, in 1876, and duly consecrated it to that purpose on the 20th of May that year, under the name of *Sadhan Kanan*, or a "Forest Abode for Religious Culture." Here many of the missionaries of the Samaj spent with him most of the days of the week in meditation and prayer, in cooking their

own food, in drawing water, in cutting bamboos, in making and paving roads, in constructing their cabins, in planting and watering trees, and in cleansing their bed-rooms. As marks of their asceticism they began to sit below trees on carpets made of hides of tigers and of other animals, in imitation of Hindu mendicants, and spend long hours in meditation. I state these things not in disparagement of them, but simply as historical facts marking the direction that Mr. Sen's thoughts took at the time.

It was towards the end of this year that Mr. Sen introduced a fourfold classification of devotees. He chose from amongst his missionaries four different sets of men to represent four types of religious life. The *Yogi* or the adept in rapt communion, the *Bhakta*, or the adept in rapturous love of God, the *Jnani* or the earnest seeker of true knowledge and the *Shetak* or the active servant of humanity. These four orders were constituted and four different kinds of lessons were given to the disciples of the respective classes.

But on the other hand the *Dharma Sadhan*, the very useful journal of the *Sangat Sabha*, disappeared in 1875. At the beginning of 1876, Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar complained that the *Bharat Ashram* was not making any progress. And we also meet with no particular mention, in that year's

Theistic Annual, conducted by Mr. Mozoomdar, of the work of the *Indian Reform Association* as a body. The *Brahmo Niketan*, the boarding house for Brahmo students, also languished during these years, till it came to a close in 1877.

There was another thing noticeable during these closing years of the *Brahmo Samaj of India*. The hold of the movement upon the younger generation which had attracted so much notice at the commencement of Mr. Sen's career had well-nigh ceased before 1876. No new candidates for initiation were forthcoming. Mr. Sen no longer spoke in English, except once a year, on the occasion of the anniversary festival and views opposed to the principles of the Samaj were being openly and publicly propagated by a class of Hindu revivalists, in many public platforms without being controverted by the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj.

This was the condition of the Church when it entered upon the year 1877. From the beginning of that year, as has been already noticed, the Samadarshi party renewed their efforts for the introduction of a constitutional form of church government. But Mr. Sen and his chosen friends went on developing the new lines of thought they had adopted for themselves. There was no sign of abatement of their zeal for the new ideas. On the

contrary many of the tendencies to which Mr. Sen's critics objected were aggravated and criticism became rife and unsparing in Brahmo circles.

When Mr. Sen and his friends were engaged in their ascetic practices at Morepukur, here in Calcutta, the reformatory spirit was running high amongst the younger section of the progressive Brahmos. In the beginning of 1877, a number of them formed something like a Secret League, for the furtherance of some advanced ideas. After a solemn ceremony of special service and prayer they took a number of vows ; one of which bound them never to encourage idolatry and caste in their social and domestic lives ; the other pledged them never to encourage marriage between young men below twenty-one and girls below sixteen. Some of the Samadarshi Party men entered into this League and took those solemn vows. It was also joined by a number of East Bengal young men, some of whom, perhaps, belonged to a reforming party, who, some years back, had been conducting, at Dacca, a journal called *Mohapap Balyabibaha* or "The Great Sin of Child-marriage."

In the autumn of 1877, in the midst of his ascetic professions and practices on the one hand, and of these proceedings of the reformatory party on the other, Mr. Sen startled his friends as well as

his adversaries, by quite unexpectedly purchasing a large mansion, with a spacious compound, on the Circular Road of Calcutta, and by furnishing it in a rich style. This house he duly occupied, after a religious ceremony, on the 12th November, calling it since then the Lily Cottage. And he also proceeded to form a little colony of his close adherents, by helping them to build small houses of their own, in its neighbourhood. Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar also built a house of his own near it and called it "The Peace Cottage." The purchase of the spacious mansion was due, as it came to be known afterwards, to the desire on the part of Mr. Sen to have a fitting abode for the reception of the Kuch Behar party, who wanted to come and see his daughter previous to her engagement.

Soon after the consecration of the Lily Cottage, a rumour became current in Brahmo circles that a marriage between Mr. Sen's eldest daughter, who was not ~~still~~ then fourteen and accordingly had not attained the marriageable age fixed by Act III of 1872, and the young Maharaja of Kuch Behar, who was not known as a Brahmo at that time and who was a minor and a lad of fifteen, was in contemplation ; and furthermore, that the marriage was to be celebrated according to non-Brahmo rites. The rumour was at first

received with distrust by all who knew Mr. Sen and had confidence in him ; but it gained in strength day by day and attempts were made at private interviews with him to gain correct information. The first to interview him on that subject was Mr. A. M. Bose, who informed him of the grave anxiety that the rumour had created in Brahmo circles. The spirit in which Mr. Bose had approached Mr. Sen was best shown in a remarkable letter he wrote to him within a short time after that interview and which evoked general admiration at the time.* But Mr. Sen told him that nothing had been settled up to that time. Sometime after a rumour became current that the proposed marriage could not take place in as much as the Lieutenant-Governor had forbidden the Maharaja to marry at such an early age. But by the middle of January 1878 definite information reached some of the Brahmos, that the marriage had been fixed upon and certain conditions had been agreed to ; namely, (1) that the marriage should take place immediately, *i.e.*, before the young prince's departure for England ; (2) that it was to be celebrated according to the Kuch Behar ritual, with the idolatrous portions expunged ; (3) that Mr. Sen's brother Krishna Behari was to give away the bride instead of Mr. Sen, who would be excluded

* *Vide Appendix F.*

from that function on account of his having lost caste ; (4) that the Kuch Behar priests would preside at the marriage and that no Brahmo service or no officiating Brahmo minister would have anything to do with the ceremony.

These rumours naturally had a very great disquieting effect on the minds of Brahmos in Calcutta. They could hardly believe what they heard asserted with some degree of authority by those who had more reliable information. In this state of perplexity three Calcutta Brahmos, including the present writer, again waited upon Mr. Sen on Saturday, February 2nd, "requesting more definite information on the subject." But Mr. Sen persistently refused to enlighten them on the exact nature of the negotiations pending. Upon their bringing to his notice the excited condition of the public mind and intimating that the violation of Brahmo principles in the proposed marriage would lead to disastrous consequences in the Brahmo Samaj, Mr. Sen got very much excited (which was so unusual with him), hurled his defiance at his adversaries, and refused to give them any information.

This happened on the 2nd of February ; yet on the 9th of that month the *Indian Mirror* came out with an announcement that the marriage was to take place soon. The public announcement was

made on the 9th of February, but detailed and definite information had reached us before. This was a signal for many from amongst the general body of Brahmos, as well as the female emancipationists, the constitutionalists, the Five Lamps men, and the Secret League men, to combine into a strong and compact body of protestors against the intended marriage. On the night of the 8th February, a number of leading Brahmos, including old Shib Chandra Deb, a revered Brahmo leader, who had joined the Samaj in the early fifties, met together and sat solemnly and prayerfully deliberating till 2 o'clock in the morning, on the steps that were necessary for them to take in the presence of the grave danger that threatened the Church. As a result of their deliberations a Provisional Committee, consisting of Messrs. A. M. Bose, D. M. Das, S. N. Sastri, G. C. Mahalanabis, J. N. Chakraverty, D. N. Ganguli, Kali Nath Datta, N. N. Chatterji, Sasipada Bannerji, with Shib Chandra Deb as Secretary, was appointed to watch the course of the agitation: and it was also decided to inform Mr. Sen, in a formal letter, of their opinions and feelings on the proposed marriage. The letter was drafted at the meeting, and presented to Mr. Sen in the afternoon of the following day, 9th February, the same day that the public announcement was made in the *Mirror*. This is what Rev. Bhai P. C.

Mozoomdar says about that letter and the treatment it received at Mr. Sen's hands :—

“The protestors took exception to the proposed marriage, firstly, because it was not to be celebrated according to the Marriage Act of the Brahmo Samaj ; and secondly because the girl was under her fourteenth year, and the Maharaja was not yet sixteen. In the third place they feared that idolatrous, or, at all events, untheistic rites and ceremonies were likely to be introduced. They also pointed out that the Maharaja not being a Brahmo, should not marry the daughter of the Brahmo leader, and they argued that as the custom of polygamy was long in use in the royal family of Kuch Behar the proposed marriage, being independent of the provisions of the Act, gave no guarantee against the repetition of that evil. These were the arguments of the protestors soberly put, and it is impossible to deny there was rational ground for the alarm felt. But unfortunately they did not confine themselves to this. As the controversy grew hot, in various letters, remonstrances, and especially newspapers, various bitter accusations, and violent charges were made against Keshub, which provoked angry retorts by his friends. And thus the work of mutual vilification went on with increasing rage, till the time approached for the marriage to take place. Keshub did not read the protests, did not give any explanations, far less make any replies, but he repeatedly said that if any other person did what he was doing, he would undoubtedly protest with vigour.”

The letter of protest was signed by 23 Brahmos. * All these 23 persons were men who had borne and suffered much for the sake of Brahmoism ; and the signatories were headed by Shib Chandra Deb. Many were astonished to hear

* *Vide* Appendix G.

at the time that Mr. Sen had not even read that letter. It is explicable only on the supposition that he lost his habitual equanimity at the time and launched into his new career with a determination to disregard all opposition. We are told by Rev. Bhai Girish Chandra Sen, one of Mr. Sen's missionaries, in the account he has given of this controversy, that Mr. Sen had decided not to answer any letters that dared to judge him without a previous friendly enquiry. But to friendly enquiries also, as stated above, he turned a deaf ear.

A circular letter bearing the signatures of Shib Chandra Deb, D. M. Das, A. M. Bose, &c., as representing the Provisional Committee, was despatched the same day, 9th of February, to the provincial Samajes, sending to them the Calcutta protest, and stating their reasons for it.

Within a few days letters of protest poured in from individual Brahmos and provincial Samajes. I cannot stop to give here the purport of these letters ; suffice it to say that out of 80 Samajes in Bengal as many as 50 expressed their disapprobation ; 3 only were in favour of the marriage ; 4 expressed no decided opinion ; and the rest remained silent. Not to speak of individual protests, there were letters of protest from Brahmo students of Calcutta, from twelve Anusthanik Brahmos of Dacca, including Dr. P. K. Ray, from twenty

Brahmo ladies of Calcutta and from seven Brahmo ladies from a village at Vikrampore.

To keep the members of the Provincial Samajes informed about what was going on in Calcutta, the protestors soon started a Bengali weekly paper called *Samalochak*, or The Critic, and an English weekly paper called the *Brahmo Public Opinion*. The two journals went on reporting from week to week what was being said and done in connection with the agitation.

At this stage, the protestors felt the necessity of appointing a committee of leading men to watch over the course of the agitation and to take such steps as they thought necessary for conserving the best interests of the Brahmo Samaj. Accordingly, they applied to Mr. Sen for the use of the Albert Hall, of which he was the Secretary. They obtained permission and announced a public meeting for the 23rd February. Till the hour of the meeting they were not aware that any difficulties about the use of the Hall would arise; but when people assembled in large numbers in the hall at the appointed hour, it was found that there was no permission to use the gas-lights, as no application had been separately made for them. Accordingly, there was utter confusion; which was further aggravated by the uproar kept up by a number of young men, amongst whom

some young members of the Sen family were observed taking a leading part. Consequently, that meeting had to be adjourned, which was subsequently held in the Town Hall on the 28th of February next. The Albert Hall meeting had been convened in the name of Shib Chandra Deb, the Secretary of the Provisional Committee, to which members of the *Brahmo Samaj of India* were specially invited. Apparently under the instruction of Mr. Sen, a letter of protest was sent by Mr. P. C. Mozoomdar to the chairman of that meeting, saying that none but the Secretary of the *Brahmo Samaj of India* could invite its members to a meeting. This letter, however, could not be read by Mr. A. M. Bose, the chairman of the meeting.

At the Town Hall meeting a committee, called the *Brahmo Samaj Committee*, was appointed consisting of 21 leading men with Babu Shib Chunder Deb as Secretary, "with a view," to use the language of the Resolution, "to take such measures as they consider necessary, in the present crisis in the progress and history of the Brahmo Samaj, to conserve the best interests of the Samaj, and to organise it on a constitutional basis".

It should also be stated here, in passing, that after the adjournment of the Albert Hall meeting on the 23rd February, a meeting of Mr. Sen's

supporters was held in the same Hall, the very next day, under the presidency of Dr. Harish Chandra Sarma, who was known in Calcutta as a *tantric shakta* i.e. a member of an idolatrous sect of shakti-worshippers, despised in Bengal for many immoral practices; and in which Babu Nabagopal Mitra, formerly of the Adi Brahmo Samaj and one who had subsequently married his own daughter at the age of nine, was the principal speaker. A congratulatory address to Mr. Sen was voted at this meeting.

Whilst the protestors were thus seriously exercised in their minds about measures of conservation of the Samaj, the bridal party were going through their new experiences at Kuch Behar.

Now I must stop and let Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar relate the rest of the story :—

“ The settlement of rites took place about the 12th of February. The chief pandit and the Maharaja departed for Kuch Behar with the paper fully describing them on the 22nd, and Babu Keshub Chandra Sen, with his daughter and friends, was preparing to leave Calcutta on Monday, the 25th. On Saturday night, however, a telegram came from Kuch Behar to the effect that Brahmo ceremonies had been introduced into the marriage ritual and this would not be allowed. Another message to the same purport came a short time before the bride's party left for Kuch Behar on the 25th. Keshub despatched a protest against these messages, drawing attention to the marriage conditions previously settled in consultation both with the accredited agents of the Kuch Behar Raja and the Government of Bengal. But misgivings were for the first time

felt, and an inquiry was made whether the special train by which the bridal party was to leave for Kuch Behar could not be stopped. No, it could not be. And Keshub left Calcutta with his daughter and friends on the 25th February. Why did he do this in the face of the unfavourable messages and misgivings? Another man with a deeper experience of the ways of the Native States, and official irregularities, would not perhaps have ventured into the enemy's camp so precipitately; Keshub's great natural sagacity ought to have warned and deterred him. Unfortunately it must be added that Keshub did not act sagaciously here."

We learn from Pandit Gour Govinda Roy's account that upon the receipt of the Kuch Behar telegram, a telegram in reply had been sent by Mr. Sen reminding the bridegroom's party of the previously settled conditions but no satisfactory results ensued. Let Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar conclude his story:—

"The marriage had been appointed to take place on Wednesday, the 6th March. On Monday the 4th, a number of persons, deputed for the purpose, came to the bridal quarters, and proposed material alterations in the marriage rites settled before, which greatly astonished Keshub and his friends. There was a strong and painful controversy. Of course he strongly declined to accede to the new proposals. On Tuesday a certain ceremony called *Audhibash* was to be performed which required the removal of the bride into the palace. This also meant that Keshub's daughter was to be kept in custody of the palace authorities, until the actual marriage ceremonies were performed on the next day. Keshub unfortunately gave his consent to the arrangement, which involved him still further, and put him almost entirely in the power of the Kuch Behar officials. The question again comes why he consented to part with his daughter when he knew the

marriage rites were the subject of bitter dispute? His faith only must answer that question".

"Nothing about the rites had yet been settled. The ladies of the Kuch Behar palace insisted that the ceremony of Hom (fire worship) should be performed ; that no Brahmo service at the scene of marriage was to be allowed ; that no marriage vows should be taken ; and that non-Brahmins, including even Keshub himself, should be excluded from the place of marriage. Keshub of course could never accede to these conditions. So hour after hour was spent in fruitless disputations, and nobody knew what the result of it was to be ; whether indeed the marriage was going to take place at all ; till at about midnight the concession was made that the bride's party only should take no part in the idolatrous ceremonies. Keshub was in a state so unusual with him, so absolutely helpless, so abjectly despondent during these hours, that he at once and eagerly accepted this concession as far as it went, and seemed content to escape barely with the observance of his principles. But he was little prepared for what awaited him at the scene of marriage. The sacred vessels, *ghats*, which he had tried to exclude by his supplementary conditions, were there and even two still more obnoxious symbols were there. Of course these were not worshipped, nor meant for worship, but their presence was not agreeable to theistic eyes. Protests were made, but to no purpose. The Brahmo service when attempted was drowned by deafening peals of innumerable tom-toms. Keshub and non-Brahmin priests on his side were allowed to preside * over the ceremonies. The marriage vows were not allowed to be taken at the scene of the marriage, but were taken afterwards. Hom, or the ceremony of fire-worship, was not performed

* Mr. Mozoomdar's information on this subject is not quite correct. Mr. Sen was not allowed to give away the bride. He was simply allowed to be present. And Pandit Gour Govinda Roy was simply allowed to be present to see that the ritual settled after conference was adhered to. The ceremony was conducted by the Kuch Behar priests.

by Keshub's daughter but by the Maharaja. The theistic character of the marriage was very much marred ; almost every Brahmo present was deeply mortified."

That the marriage was not a Brahmo marriage will be further shown by the following extract taken from the official records of Kuch Behar :—

"The rites observed were Hindu in all essential features though in deference to the religious principles of the bride's father, idolatrous *mantras* were omitted and the presence of an idol was dispensed with. *Care was, however, taken to retain whatever the Brahmins considered essential to the validity of the marriage.**

These facts when they became known in Calcutta literally convulsed the Brahmo community. Upon the return of Mr. Sen to Calcutta, letters of requisition signed by a large body of Brahmos were sent up to Rev.Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar, as the Assistant Secretary of the *Brahmo Samaj of India* and also as the Secretary of the Congregation of the *Brahma Mandir*, to call meetings of the two bodies to take into consideration the conduct of Mr. Sen, who was the Secretary of the first and the Minister of the second. Both the letters were returned without the requisition being complied with.

But strangely enough, two meetings were independently called, with a curious advertisement, that Mr. Sen would propose "that the present secretary of the Samaj (Mr. Sen) be requested to

* The italics are mine.

resign his post as he has lost the confidence and respect of the Samaj." The congregation meeting was first held in the *Brahma Mandir*, on Thursday, the 21st March. The first question that divided the parties was the chairmanship of the meeting. The requisitionists proposed Mr. D. M. Das as the chairman, but Mr. Sen's friends would have none but him in that post. The requisitionists objected to that arrangement, in as much as Mr. Sen's conduct was subject for discussion at the meeting. The requisitionists asked to take the sense of the meeting ; but the other party wanted to exclude many of them from the membership of the congregation by applying an old rule of membership, seldom put in practice before that day. Thus hours after hours were wasted in heated discussion, till at last Mr. Sen consented to Mr. D. M. Das's taking the chair. But as soon as the latter stepped into the chair, Mr. Sen with his immediate followers left the meeting, leaving the requisitionists to carry on their work, in the midst of great uproar kept up by a number of young men, amongst whom were noticed, as on a previous occasion, some young Sens and their friends. The promoters of the meeting concluded the proceedings after having deposed Mr. Sen from the post of minister and appointed five gentlemen to alternately officiate as ministers of the congregation ; namely, Bijay

Krishna Goswami, Shib Chandra Deb, Ram Kumar Vidyaratna, Umesh Chandra Datta and Jadu Nath Chakraverty.

Next Sunday there was a conflict about the possession of the pulpit. Early in the morning that day news was brought to the protestors, that Mr. Sen had secured the *Mandir* and placed it under lock and key and had stationed his emissaries at the gates. Accordingly, some of the protestors, of their own accord and without previous consultation with their friends, went to place their lock and key outside the gates of the chapel to secure possession of it, in accordance with the resolution passed by them on the previous Thursday. As a result, there was a scuffle at the *Mandir* gate with those who were already in possession of it. The protestors succeeded, however, in locking the gate; but these locks were subsequently broken and removed by Mr. Sen's friends.

In the evening the struggle assumed another shape. A little before the time appointed for the evening service the protestors appeared on the scene with one of their newly appointed ministers ; but they found the pulpit occupied from an early hour by Sadhu Aghorenath, who had been set up there to keep possession of the pulpit till Mr. Sen arrived. They waited till the pulpit would be vacated by its occupier. At

last the time arrived for Aghorenath to vacate it and for the minister of the protesting party to step in. When the latter made an attempt to mount the pulpit he was prevented from behind by one of Mr. Sen's supporters. In the meantime, Mr. Sen took possession of it with the help of the police. The protestors left the *Mandir* in a body and held divine service in a neighbouring house. After the conclusion of Mr. Sen's service, the protestors once more appeared in the *Mandir* to hold a short service of theirs, in obedience to the resolution previously passed ; but their voices were drowned and they were rudely expelled by the police under order of Mr. Sen's friends. Henceforth the protestors began to hold regular weekly services of their own in another place, and gave up attending the *mandir* service. This was the commencement of the real schism properly speaking ; though the formal one came afterwards. The separate weekly service of the protestors was kept up from this time, till they built a *Mandir* of their own.

After this Mr. Sen abstained from occupying the pulpit for a few Sundays ; but was called back to it, because, as it was given out at the time, many members of the congregation who sided with him had asked him, in a formal letter, not to give up preaching.

On the 29th of March there appeared

an extraordinary number of Mr. Sen's Bengali organ, the *Dharmatattwa*, which contained an Address* meant for the Brahmo public, in which there was an elaborate defence of Mr. Sen over the signatures of Rev. Bhais P. C. Mozoomdar and Gour Govinda Roy. In this document two main arguments were put forward in justification of the match ; first, that Mr. Sen had never sought and never even thought of it. The proposal, coming from the Government without his seeking for it, he accepted as providential and as such binding upon him ;—secondly, that the Government agreed to treat the wedding practically as a betrothal. The rest of the document was a repetition of the events as related by Mr. Mozoomdar. The published defence gave no satisfaction to the protestors and they adhered to their course. It is proper to note at this stage that the protestors never questioned the sincerity of Mr. Sen's declaration that he acted from what he considered to be a Divine command, as will be manifest from the following declaration published in the *Brahmo Public Opinion* of April 18th, 1878 :

“ Suffice it to say, that the protestors thought, the whole Brahmo Public thought, Babu K. C. Sen to have fallen into a great mistake, but no one ever attributed any base motive for his action.”

* *Vide* Appendix—H.

After this, some further time was wasted in official correspondence between Babu Shib Chandra Deb and Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar on the subject of calling a Special Meeting of the *Brahmo Samaj of India*, because the meeting of the same body previously advertised by Mr. Sen, of his own accord, as he said, had been suddenly postponed *sine die*. Mr. Mozoomdar persistently refused to call another meeting. Objections were set forth against calling a meeting on the ground that 51 members headed by Babu Joy Gopal Sen had sent in a letter to Mr. Sen as Secretary, forbidding him to call a meeting of that body for some time to come.

When all efforts to get a meeting of the *Brahmo Samaj of India* called ultimately failed, the *Brahmo Samaj Committee* referred the question to the Mofussil Samajes. In reply to their query a large number of Samajes expressed their sense of the need of a separate organization and a letter signed by 425 Brahmos and Brahmikas was also received advocating the same course. Accordingly, a public meeting of Brahmos was held in the Town Hall, on the 15th May, 1878, and the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj* was duly organized. Mr. A. M. Bose was appointed the first President; Babus Shib Chandra Deb, and Umesh Chandra Datta, were respectively appointed Secretary and

Assistant Secretary ; and a committee of 49 persons, many of whom were representatives of Provincial Samajes, was appointed with the request, that its members should submit to a general meeting of members, within two months, after circulation among the Provincial Samajas, the rules regarding the constitution of the new Samaj. That meeting also adopted a formal Statement* of the reasons that had influenced the promoters in taking the course that culminated in that day's proceedings. The main resolution laying the foundation of the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj* was the following :—

“ That this meeting deeply deplores the want of a constitutional organization in the Brahmo Samaj and does humbly establish a Samaj, to be called the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj*, with a view to remove the serious and manifold evils resulting from the state of things and to secure the representation of the views and harmonious co-operation of the General Brahmo Community, in all that affects the progress of the Theistic Church in India.”

Thus by an irony of fate, as it were, the second schism, like the first one, was also started on constitutional lines.

Mr. A. M. Bose presided at this meeting ; and during his presidential address declared that out of 250 *anusthanik* (thorough-going and practical) Brahmo families in the province, as many as 170

* *Vide* Appendix—I.

had declared in favour of the foundation of a separate Samaj. The meeting was also graced by the presence of old Rajnarain Bose, as representing the Adi Brahmo Samaj. The chairman also read a letter from the venerable Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, communicating his blessings and prayers for the success of the new Samaj.

I cannot, however, close this painful narrative of the second schism without referring to a letter dated 14th May,* that is the day before the Town Hall Meeting, addressed by Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar, as Assistant Secretary of the *Brahmo Samaj of India*, to Babu Shib Chandra Deb. It seems that, on the eve of the formation of a rival organization, Mr. Sen, roused up to a sense of the critical pass to which matters had been driven and also of the danger that threatened the Church, had caused Mr. Mozoomdar to write the letter in which it was contended that the *Brahmo Samaj of India* was an all-comprehensive and constitutional organization, in which there was no room for another schism; and it was promised that a public meeting of that body would be called after six or seven months at the discretion of the office-bearers. The letter was published in that day's *Indian Mirror* and was referred to by the Chairman at the meeting, but it created no change

* *Vide* Appendix—J.

in the situation. It was replied to by several speakers at the meeting and gave in fact occasion for the adoption of the former Statement of reasons, as the last resolution of the meeting. It was subsequently dealt with in detail, in a letter dated 18th May and addressed to Mr. P. C. Mozoomdar by Babu Shib Chandra Deb.* Thus was the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj* launched into existence. Here drops the curtain on this last act of a most painful drama.

However sad be the termination of this period of the activity of Mr. Sen, the net results achieved by that activity were certainly great. The number of Samajes, which were scarcely more than a dozen at the time of his joining the Samaj in 1858, had risen to 124 at the time of the second schism. Of these 80 were in Bengal, 8 in Assam, 6 in Behar, 11 in the N. W. Provinces, 5 in Oude, 7 in the Bombay Presidency, 2 in Sindh, and 5 in Southern India. There were 21 periodicals under Brahmo management, conducted in English, Bengali, Marhati, Urdu and Hindi. Marriages according to the reformed rites of the Samaj began to be celebrated from 1861. At the time of the second schism their number had swelled up to a total of 81 and was divided among all parts of the country. The number of Mr. Sen's mis-

* *Vide* Appendix—K.

sionaries, who were a little over half a dozen at the time of the first schism, had swelled up to fourteen, who worked in Calcutta, besides nearly half a dozen who worked at Dacca.

Thus, under Mr. Sen, the Brahmo Samaj had risen to be "a power, and a power of no mean order," as Dr. Duff had prophesied in 1863. On this growing power there came a check, a sudden and deplorable check, after the Kuch Behar marriage, which the later history will unfold.

The contributions of Keshub Chunder Sen to Brahmoism, during the preceding two periods of its history :—Though this part of the history of the Samaj closes with a terrible conflict, yet it is but meet that I should thankfully recapitulate, in a collective form, the important contributions of Keshub Chunder Sen to the cause of the Brahmo Samaj during the preceding two periods. But for him Brahmoism, during those periods, could not have risen to be that power which it became in the land, and let me briefly relate some of the features that tended to raise it to that position.

The first noteworthy contribution that he made to the cause was the enunciation and accentuation of the doctrine of *God in Conscience*. Such enunciation necessarily developed the moral side of the faith, by bringing human conduct within the domain of man's spirituality. It generated

a desire in the hearts of the younger generation of Brahmos to be honest in thought and action, to shun wrong, to seek the truth, to do one's duty, and to be just and righteous in all their dealings with others. Not that it was lost sight of by Devendra Nath, for his great act of renunciation after his father's death was a practical illustration of it ; but it was under Keshub Chunder Sen, that it was enforced as an essential feature of the faith of the Samaj and became a social asset.

That doctrine of God in Conscience was the point on which Mr. Sen laid the whole insistence of his nature during the first period of his religious life. And the mark of his leadership lay in the fact that he succeeded in communicating the new fervour to kindred souls. The consequence was a great spiritual and moral upheaval, the like of which has seldom been seen. Under that impulse men abjured whatever they considered to be false or wrong in their individual or social lives, and faced terrible social persecution on that account. Properly speaking that was the beginning of earnest and consistent Brahmoism, which has marked a new epoch in the history of the Samaj.

This doctrine of God in Conscience was further developed, in subsequent years, into the doctrine of *adesh* or Divine Command, which became a

prominent feature of Mr. Sen's teachings. Not in mere questions of right and wrong, but in all important concerns of his life, he believed, like Mahomet, to have been impelled by a Divine impulse, and was at times led, like the Arabian prophet, into error.

His second great contribution was the bringing of man's social life within the domain of his religious duty. In this he differed from Devendra Nath. Whilst the efforts of the latter ~~were~~ were mainly directed to the establishment of the worship of the Infinite and the Supreme, as opposed to the worship of finite things, leaving questions of social reform to individual tastes and inclinations, Mr. Sen tried to view social questions from the standpoint of a pure and spiritual faith, making the improvement of their social life an accessory to men's progress in spiritual life. Social reform naturally came as a part of that fundamental conception. Under the influence of their leader the progressive party tried to abjure those social abuses that tended to degrade society or encourage vice or injustice. The conviction became strong in them that it was only by raising and ennobling man's social life that a pure and spiritual religion like theism could establish itself as a social and domestic faith of man and convert human society into a household of God. This conviction took firm possession

of Mr. Sen's mind and he unfurled the banner of social reform by systematic efforts for the abolition of caste and also by trying to communicate new light and new life to our womanhood.

We may justly ascribe this passion for social reform to the influence of Mr. Sen's Christian studies. The reason for my ascribing it to Christian influence is that it is so unlike the Hindu teaching on the subject, with which we are familiar. Spiritual Hinduism teaches men to look upon society as a bondage and a snare ; consequently the improvement of human society forms no part of its spiritual aspirations. A contrast to this teaching is furnished by the fundamental note of Christianity which seeks to establish the Kingdom of God upon earth, *i.e.*, amongst men. As the message of higher Hinduism is essentially anti-social, the message of Christianity is essentially social. Besides, Hinduism lays its whole emphasis on *anasakti* or detachment from the joys of the world, whereas Christianity insists upon *righteousness* as the goal of spiritual attainment. Accordingly, *social endeavour* is a necessary part of its spiritual culture, and *morality* is a cardinal feature of its spiritual life. Mr. Sen by imbibing the spirit of Christianity imbibed this fundamental note also. He early lent his influence towards raising and reforming society, His example in that respect,

in taking his young wife in 1861 to the Brahmo service and to the house of the Tagores, had its inspiring effect and a movement for improving the education and social status of women was forthwith inaugurated and widow marriages and inter-caste marriages began to multiply.

The third feature that he imbibed from his Christian studies and contributed to the spiritual life of the Brahmo Samaj was the infusion of the spirit of *repentance* and *prayer*. These are well-known features of Christian life as developed in the West. Whilst the prevailing ideas with our *Rishis* in the East were *detachment*, *meditation* and *communion*, the ideas that took firm hold of the minds of Christians in West were *faith*, *repentance* and *prayer*. It can be justly said that Christianity bases the efficacy of its teaching upon awakening a sense of sin in the human soul. Its doctrines of man as a born sinner and of God's unrelenting hostility to that sin have brought into prominence the three spiritual attitudes of *sense of sin*, *repentance* and *prayer*. Therefore, whoever studies it, with interest and care, is sure to be impressed by them. Mainly from his Christian studies, Mr. Sen imbibed these three principles, and they became matters of spiritual experience with him. His own spiritual life commenced with them. How his convictions affected a large

number of his friends and associates has already been described.

His fourth great contribution to the cause was the spirit of self-surrender for its propagation, that he succeeded in evoking among his friends and followers. Some account has been given of the manner in which the spirit shadowed forth in his little booklet called *True Faith* inspired his early associates and made them surrender themselves for the work of propagation in the face of great privations.

The fifth contribution was the infusion of *bhakti* or devotional fervour into the movement. Before his time the spiritual life of the Samaj partook more of the nature of thought and communion than of devotional fervour. Under Devendra Nath, who was a disciple of the Vedic *Rishis*, the piety of the Samaj occupied a high platform of elevating thought and spiritual communion, somewhat inaccessible to the common people. Mr. Sen partly changed that character by the infusion of *bhakti* into it. From Chaitanya's followers he introduced the practice of *Sankirtan* or devotional singing, which was an innovation in those days, but which opened the flood-gates of devotional passion, making Brahmoism a practical religious culture, sweet and soothing to the human heart. During the course of the preceding two or

three centuries the disciples of Chaitanya had fallen under popular contempt in Bengal, owing to the introduction of many objectionable practices amongst them. Mr. Sen rescued the name of the great prophet from that popular contempt by his warm advocacy of the methods of propagation introduced by him. Those new methods certainly brought Brahmoism nearer to the popular mind.

The sixth was his sense of the universality of theism. It possessed him something like a passion. The conviction forced itself upon him from his study of the lives of the great religious teachers of humanity. He found all of them knit together by a common bond. Beneath the local and national differences of various creeds and various teachings he found a universal element, in which all of them agreed. This conviction became further modified, in later times, into an ideal harmony of all religions, which led him into the rather novel doctrine that all religions were true. Many of us will certainly deny that position ; but Mr. Sen's conception of the great and glorious mission of the theism of the Samaj to unify conflicting sects and creeds was certainly prophetic.

His seventh contribution was the emphasis that he laid upon the principle, first enunciated and enforced by Rajah Ram Mohan Roy, that "*the service of man was the service of God.*" That in fact

was the ruling principle of the Raja's life. In that he differed, on the one hand, from the ascetic principles of the ordinary Hindu mendicant, and, on the other, from the rank ceremonialism of the ordinary Hindu householder. As a part of his spiritual exercises the Rajah threw himself into the service of man and denied himself rest in that pursuit. Keshub Chunder Sen was a worthy follower of the Rajah in that respect. His philanthropic activity, specially after his return from England, kept pace with his deeper spiritual undertakings. This certainly was a valuable contribution to the faith of the Brahmo Samaj.

His eighth contribution was his faith in the Divine mission of the Brahmo Samaj. Like the idea of the union and fusion of all religions, this also was something like a passion with him. It upheld him in his self-surrender for the service of the Samaj; it enabled him to inspire his friends and associates with an apostolical spirit and it strengthened him in the midst of all his trials and sufferings. In later years he developed that idea further, with some objectionable features, into that of the *New Dispensation*, but even at this early stage, it was operating in his mind. For instance in his lecture on "*Behold the Light of Heaven in India*," delivered in 1875, after describing the changes brought about by

Divine Providence in the destiny of the Indian people, he goes on to say :—

“ Not man but God had kindled that spirit of reform which like wild-fire spreads today from province to province among the diverse races and tribes that inhabit the country. Not in our way but in His own way has the Lord kindled that fire, and in His mysterious ways is He working out the salvation of the country. He does not follow our dictates or suggestions ; He does not act as you or I may wish. His ways are not as man's ways. We may have our respective theories of India's reformation, we may differ and quarrel as to the best means of remedying national evils. But the Lord of nations doth what seemeth best in His sight.”

Then again :—

“ A new Dispensation, therefore, has been sent unto us, which presents to us, not indeed a new and singular creed, but a new development of by-gone dispensations. The Divine message sent to India, far from clashing with anything communicated to men by God in ancient times, fulfills all that have been sent before. It comes not to destroy, but to fulfil the law and the prophets.”

But the most important contribution of Mr. Sen was the enforcement of the habit of daily devotion on the part of his friends and followers. How the introduction of the custom of daily Divine service in his house, even so early as 1867, brought on great spiritual changes in the movement, has been related in some of the previous pages. Mr. Sen stuck to that practice to the end of his life. The daily service in his house was a meeting ground, for many years, for all spiritually-minded and devoutly-disposed persons, who found spiritual strength

CHAPTER III

and refreshment in it. Mr. Sen felt the necessity of daily domestic devotions so much that he had laid it down as an essential condition of domestic life in his *New Sanhita* ; and the last public ceremony in which he took part, and to which he was carried on men's shoulders from his death-bed, was the consecration of his domestic chapel, which he had built up for the daily devotional gathering of his family. I consider this to be the greatest contribution of Mr. Sen to the cause of the Brahmo Samaj ; for, if I have understood aright the mission of the Samaj in this land and in the world at large, it certainly lies, first, in the establishment of *the free and unfettered, the pure and spiritual* worship of the Supreme Being, in our *individual, domestic and social lives* ; and secondly, in the enforcement of the noble doctrine that *the service of man is the service of God*. These are the two principles on which modern Indian Theism is built up. And who will deny that Keshub Chunder Sen largely contributed to secure that basis ?

Every one will admit that these valuable contributions of Mr. Sen tended to make the religion of the Brahmo Samaj a *positive* spiritual culture, instead of a merely *negative* form of *dissent* from current forms of superstition. It is the positive element in religion that alone abides and that alone conquers. Mere dissent is good only as criticism and

as a safe-guard against error ; but it does not unite, rather it tends to divide. It is the positive element in all religions that has really formed the secret spring of their strength. Nay, the main function of religion is to unite man with the Supreme Being, who alone is the abode of peace for the human soul, and the fountain of all pure and righteous impulses. And only such positive teachings as promote that spiritual union are useful towards man's spiritual edification and elevation. History bears witness to this fact. Take for instance the cases of Christianity and Mahomedanism. Christianity arose by protesting against the superstitions of the Pharisees and the Sadducees ; but its strength, its conquering energy, did not lie in those negative professions, but in that glorious maxim which taught men—to love God with all their minds, with all their hearts and with all their strength, and to love their neighbours as themselves ; and also in the success with which that maxim was applied to life. It also largely lay in the personal example and influence of Jesus himself in that direction. That central figure has ever been a source of positive influence through the ages. In the case of Mahomedanism too we witness the very same thing. No other teacher has so strenuously opposed popular superstitions, and yet no other teacher has so far succeeded in establish-

ing his vigorous rule over the hearts of men. His conquest was not certainly due to his negative protests, but to the *positive trust* that he inspired in his adherents, in Allah-Hu-Akbar, or God the Most Great. Accordingly, we look upon the services of Mr. Sen to the cause of Brahmoism during these two periods of its history as invaluable, because they tended to install pure and natural theism on the basis of positive faith and practice. In this he was a true disciple of Maharshi Devendra Nath, whose life mission was to establish the pure spiritual worship of the Infinite and the Supreme.

But alas ! much of the good effect of these valuable services was neutralized by the Kuch Behar incident. Nobody questions the sincerity of his professions, that he saw the direction of Divine Providence in that incident ; nobody believes that he was impelled by any filthy motive ; but all the same, the impression left by that incident on the minds of outsiders and impartial observers was a melancholy one ;—namely, that the faith was no doubt lofty and the gospel was no doubt great, but the “leaders were *morally inadequate*” :—an expression used by an English writer in an English quarterly review at the time when the Kuch Behar marriage controversy was raging. The moral inadequacy of the leaders lay in the fact, that those very men who had struggled hard at

one time to build up some high principles, had yet a leading hand in breaking them down afterwards. Who can say that we are not open to that charge ?

That conviction has certainly lowered the Brahmo Samaj in public estimation. The Brahmo Samaj rose with Keshub Chunder Sen ; with him, perhaps, it has gone down in public regard. I say this with great, very great, regret, and with a sense of shame, that we, the standard-bearers of the new faith, have not proved quite worthy of the trust reposed in us. Yet through all our weaknesses and failings Divine Providence is surely leading us. In that conviction is our hope and our strength. The schism, however deplorable by reason of many of its painful attendant circumstances, certainly indicated a *forward look and an onward march*, which showed the life that was in the movement, and which was further unfolded in the subsequent history to be narrated hereafter.

Appendix A

The Trust Deed of the Brahmo Samaj executed by Rajah Ram Mohun Roy.

THIS INDENTURE made the eighth day of January, in the year of Christ one thousand eight hundred and thirty **between** Dwarkanauth Tagore of Jorasanko in the Town of Calcutta Zumeendar, Kalleenauth Roy of Burranagore in the Zillah of Havelly in the Suburbs of Calcutta aforesaid Zumeendar, Prussunnocoomar Tagore of Pattoriaghatta in Calcutta aforesaid Zumeendar, Ramchunder Bidyabagish of Simlah in Calcutta aforesaid Pundit and Rammohun Roy of Manicktullah in Calcutta aforesaid Zumeendar of the one part and Boykontonauth Roy of Burranagur in the Zillah of Havelly in the Suburbs of the Town of Calcutta aforesaid Zumeendar, Radapersaud Roy of Manicktullah in Calcutta aforesaid Zumeendar and Ramnauth Tagore of Jorasanko Calcutta aforesaid Baniān (Trustees named and appointed for the purposes hereinafter mentioned) of the other part **witnesseth** that for and in consideration of the sum of Sicca Rupees Ten of Lawful money of Bengal by the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore to the said Dwarkanauth Tagore, Kalleenauth Roy, Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy in hand paid at and before the sealing and delivery of these Presents (the receipt

whereof they the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy do and each and every of them doth hereby acknowledge) and for settling and assuring the messuage land tenements heriditaments and premises hereinafter mentioned to be hereby granted and released to for and upon such uses trusts intents and purposes as are hereafter expressed and declared of and concerning the same and for divers other good Causes and Considerations them hereunto especially moving they the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy Have and each and every of them Hath granted bargained sold aliened released and confirmed and by these presents Do and each and every of them Doth grant bargain sell alien release and confirm unto the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore their heirs and assigns **all** that brick built messuage (hereafter to be used as a place for religious worship as is hereinafter more fully expressed and declared) Building or Tenement with the piece or parcel of Land or Ground thereunto belonging and on part whereof the same is erected and built containing by estimation four Cottahs and two Chittacks be the same a little more or less situate lying and being in the Chitpore Road in Sootanooty in the Town of Calcutta aforesaid and butted and bounded as follows (that is to say) on the north by the House and Ground now or formerly belonging to one Foolooray Rutton on

the south by the House and Ground formerly belonging to one Ramkristno Kur since deceased on the east by the House and Ground now or formerly belonging to one Fooloorey Rutton on the South by the House and Ground formerly belonging to one Ramkristno Kur since deceased on the east by the House and Ground now or formerly belonging to one Radamoney Bhamonney and on the west by the said public Road or Street commonly called Chitpore Road or howsoever otherwise the said messuage building land tenements and hereditament or any of them now are or is or heretofore were or was situated tenanted called known described or distinguished and all other the messuages lands tenements and hereditaments (if any) which are or are expressed or intended to be described or comprised in a certain Indenture of bargain and sale hereinafter referred to **together** with all and singular the out houses offices edifices buildings erections Compounds Yards walls ditches hedges fences enclosures ways paths passages woods underwoods shrubs timber and other trees entrances casements lights privileges profits benefits emoluments advantages rights titles members appendages and appurtenances whatsoever to the said messuage building land tenements hereditaments and premises or any part or parcel thereof belonging or in any wise appertaining or with the same or any part or parcel thereof now or at any time or times heretofore held used occupied possessed or enjoyed or accepted reputed deemed taken

or known as part parcel or member thereof or any part thereof (all which said messuage building land tenements hereditaments and premises are now in the actual possession of or legally vested in the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore by virtue of a bargain and sale to them thereof made by the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy for Sicca Rupees Five Consideration by an Indenture bearing date the day next before the day of the date and executed previous to the sealing and delivery of these Presents for the Term of one whole Year Commencing from the day next preceding the day of the date of the same Indenture and by force of the statute made for transferring uses into possession and the remainder and remainders reversion and reversions Yearly and other rents issues and profits thereof **and all** the Estate Right Title interest trust use possession inheritance property profit benefit claim and demand whatsoever both at Law and in Equity of them the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy respectively of into upon or out of the same or any part thereof Together with all deeds Pottahs evidences muniments and writings whatsoever which relate to the said premises or any part thereof and which now are or hereafter shall or may be in the hands possession or custody of the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar

Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy their heirs executors administrators or representatives or of any person or persons from whom he or they can or may procure the same without action or suit at Law or in Equity. **To have and to hold** the said Messuage Building land tenements hereditaments and all and singular other the premises hereinbefore and in the said Indenture of bargain or sale described and mentioned and hereby granted and released or intended so to be and every part and parcel thereof with their and every of their rights members and appurtenances unto the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore their heirs and assigns but to the uses nevertheless upon the trusts and to and for the ends intents and purposes hereinafter declared and expressed of and concerning the same and to and for no other ends intents and purposes whatsoever (that is to say) **To the use** of the said Boykontonauth Boy Radapersaud Roy Ramanauth Tagore or the survivors or survivor of them or the heirs of such survivor or their or his assigns **upon Trust** and in confidence that they the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore or the survivors or survivor of them or the heirs of such survivors or their or his assigns shall and do from time to time and at all times for ever hereafter permit and suffer the said messuage or building land tenements hereditaments and premises with their appurtenances to be used occupied enjoyed applied and appropriated

as and for a place of public meeting of all sorts and descriptions of people without distinction as shall behave and conduct themselves in an orderly sober religious and devout manner for the worship and adoration of the Eternal Unsearchable and Immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe but not under or by any other name designation or title peculiarly used for and applied to any particular Being or Beings by any man or set of men whatsoever and that no graven image statue or sculpture carving painting picture portrait or the likeness of anything shall be admitted within the said messuages building land tenements hereditaments and premises and that no sacrifice offering or oblation of any kind or thing shall ever be permitted therein and that no animal or living creature shall within or on the said messuage building land tenements hereditaments and premises be deprived of life either for religious purposes or for food and that no eating or drinking (except such as shall be necessary by any accident for the preservation of life) feasting or rioting be permitted therein or thereon and that in conducting the said worship and adoration no object animate or inanimate that has been or is or shall hereafter become or be recognized as an object of worship by any man or set of men shall be reviled or slightly or contemptuously spoken of or alluded to either in preaching praying or in the hymns or other mode of worship that may be delivered or used in the said Messuage or Building and that no sermon preaching discourse prayer or

hymn be delivered made or used in such worship but such as have a tendency to the promotion of the contemplation of the Author and Preserver of the Universe to the promotion of charity morality piety benevolence virtue and the strengthening the bonds of union Between men of all religious persuasions and creeds and also that a person of Good repute and well known for his knowledge piety and morality be employed by the said trustees or the survivors or survivor of them or the heirs of such survivor or their or his assigns as a resident Superintendent and for the purpose of superintending the worship so to be performed as is hereinbefore stated and expressed and that such worship be performed daily or at least as often as once in seven days **Provided always** and it is hereby declared and agreed by and between the parties to these presents that in case the several Trustees in and by these presents named and appointed or any of them or any other succeeding Trustees or Trustee of the said trust estate and premises for the time being to be nominated or appointed as hereinafter is mentioned shall depart this life or be desirous to be discharged of or from the aforesaid Trusts or shall refuse or neglect of become incapable by or in any manner to act in the said trusts then and in such case and from time to time as often and as soon as any such event shall happen it shall be lawful for the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy during their joint lives or the

survivors or survivor of them after the death of any or either of them jointly and in concurrence with the Trustees or Trustee for the time being and in case of and after the death of the survivor of them the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy then for the said Trustees or Trustee by any deed or writing under their or his hands and seals or hand and seal to be attested by two or more credible Witnesses to nominate substitute and appoint some other fit person or persons to supply the place of the Trustees or Trustee respectively so dying desiring to be discharged or refusing or neglecting or becoming incapable by or in any manner to act as aforesaid and that immediately after any such appointment shall be made all and every the messuage or building land tenements and hereditaments premises which under and by virtue of these presents shall be then vested in the Trustees or Trustee so dying desiring to be discharged or refusing or neglecting or becoming incapable by or in any manner to act as aforesaid shall be conveyed transferred assigned and assured so and in such manner that the same shall and may be legally fully and absolutely vested in the Trustees or Trustee so to be appointed in their or his room or stead either solely and alone or jointly with the surviving continuing or acting Trustees or Trustee as the case may require and in his or their heirs or assigns to the uses upon the Trusts and to and for the several ends intents and purposes hereinbefore declared

or expressed concerning the same and that every such new Trustees or Trustee shall and may act and assist in the management carrying on and execution of the Trusts to which they or he shall be so appointed (although they or he shall not have been invested with the seisin of the Trustees or Trustee to whose places or place they or he shall have succeeded) either jointly with the surviving continuing or other acting Trustees or Trustee or solely as the case may require in such and the like manner and in all respects as if such new Trustees or Trustee had been originally appointed by these presents **Provided lastly** and it is hereby further declared and agreed by and between the said Parties to these presents that no one or more of the said Trustees shall be answerable or accountable for the other and others of them nor for the acts defaults or omissions of the other or others of them any consent permission or privity by any or either of them to any act deed or thing to or by the other or others of them done with an intent and for the purpose only of facilitating the Execution of the trusts of these presents notwithstanding nor shall any new appointed Trustees or Trustee or their or his heirs or assigns be answerable or accountable for the acts deeds neglects defaults or omissions of any Trustees or Trustee in or to whose place or places they or he shall or may succeed but such of them the said Trustees shall be answerable accountable and responsible for his own respective acts deeds neglects defaults or omissions

only and the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy do hereby for themselves severally and respectively and for their several and respective heirs executors administrators and representatives covenant grant declare and agree with and to the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore their heirs and assigns in manner Following (that is to say) that for and notwithstanding any act deed matter or thing whatsoever heretofore by the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomer Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy or any or either of them had made done committed willingly or willingly omitted or suffered to the contrary they the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kalleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy at the time of the sealing and delivery of these presents are or one of them is lawfully rightfully and absolutely seized in their or his demesne as of Fee in their or his own right and to their or his own use of the said messuage building land tenements hereditaments and premises mentioned and intended to be hereby granted and released with the appurtenances both at Law and in Equity as of in and for a good sure perfect and indefeasible estate of inheritance in fee simple in possession and in severally without any Condition Contingent Trust Proviso power of limitation or revocation of any use or uses or any other restraint matter

or thing whatsoever which can or may Alter Change Charge determine lessen incumber defeat prejudicially affect or make void the same or defeat determine abridge or vary the uses or trusts hereby declared and expressed and also that they the said Dwarkanauth Tagore, Kalleenauth Roy, Prussunnocoomer Tagore, Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy (for and notwithstanding any such act deed matter or thing as aforesaid) or some of them now have in themselves or one of them hath in himself full power and Lawful and Absolute Authority by these presents to grant bargain sell release and assure the said messuage land tenements hereditaments and premises mentioned and intended to be hereby granted and Released with the appurtenances and the possession reversion and inheritance thereof unto and to the use of the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore and their heirs to the uses upon the Trusts and to and for the ends intents and purposes hereinbefore expressed or declared of and concerning the same according to the True intent and meaning of these presents **and further** that said messuage or building land tenements hereditaments and premises with their rights members and appurtenances shall from time to time and at all times hereafter remain continue and be to the use upon the Trusts and for the ends intents and purposes herein before declared or expressed concerning the same and shall and lawfully may be peaceably and quietly holden and enjoyed and applied and appropriated accordingly without the let

suit hindrance claim demand interruption or denial of the said Dwarkanauth Tagore, Kaleenauth Roy, Prussunnocoomar Tagore, Ramchander Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy or any or either of them or any or either of their heirs representatives or of any other person or persons now or hereafter claiming or to claim or possessing any estate right title trust or interest of into or out of the same or any part or parcel thereof by from under or in trust for them or any or either of them and that free and clear and clearly and absolutely acquitted exonerated and discharged or otherwise by the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy or any or either of them their or any or either of their Heirs executors administrators and representatives well and sufficiently saved harmless and kept indemnified of from and against all and all manner of former and other gifts grants bargains Sales Leases Mortgages uses wills devises rents arrears of rents estates titles charges and other incumbrances whatsoever had made done committed created suffered or executed by the said Dwarkanauth Tagore, Kaleenauth Roy, Prussunnocomar Tagore, Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Ram Mohun Roy or any or either of them or any or either of their heirs or representatives or any person or persons now or hereafter rightfully claiming or possessing any estate right title or interest at Law or in Equity from through under or in trust for them or any or either of them or with their

or any or either of their consent privity or procurement or acts means or defaults **and moreover** that the said Dwarkanauth Tagore, Kaleenauth Roy, Prusunno-coomar Tagore, Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Ram-mohun Roy or their heirs and representatives and all and every other person or persons whomsoever now or hereafter lawfully equitably and rightfully claiming or possessing any estate right title use trust or interest either at Law or in Equity of into upon or out of the said messuage land tenements hereditaments and premises mentioned or intended to be hereby granted and released with the appurtenances or any part thereof by from under or in trust for them or any or either of them shall and will from time to time and at all times hereafter at the reasonable request of the said Boykontonauth Roy, Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore or the survivors of survivor of them or the heirs of the survivor of their or his assigns make do acknowledge suffer execute and perfect all and every such further and other lawful and reasonable acts things deeds conveyances and assurances in the Law whatsoever for the further better more perfectly absolutely and satisfactorily granting conveying releasing confirming and assuring the said messuage or building land tenements hereditaments and premises mentioned to be hereby granted and released and every part and parcel thereof and the possession reversion and inheritance of the same with their and every of their appurtenances unto the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy and Rama-

nath Tagore or other the Trustees or Trustee for the time being and their heirs for the uses upon the Trusts and to and for the ends intents and purposes hereinbefore declared and expressed as by the said Trustees and Trustee or his or their counsel learned in the Law shall be reasonably devised or advised and required so as such further assurance or assurances contain or imply in them no further or other Warranty or Covenants on the part of the person or persons who shall be required to make or execute the same then for or against the acts deeds omissions or defaults of him her or them or his her or their heirs executors administrators and so that he she or they be not compelled or compellable to go or travel from the usual place of his her or their respective abode for making or executing the same. **In witness** whereof the said parties to these presents have hereunto subscribed and set their hands and seals the day and Year first within written.

Dwarkanauth Roy Tagore.

Prossonocoomar Tagore.

Rammohon Roy.

Radapersaud Roy.

Callynauth Roy.

শ্রীরামচন্দ্র বিদ্যাবাগীশ।

Boycontonauth Roy.

Ramanauth Tagore.

Sealed and delivered at Calcutta
aforesaid in the presence of

J. Fountain.

Atty. at Law.

Ramgopaul Day.

Appendix B

The Brahmo Covenant introduced by Devendra Nath Tagore at the time of the second revival of the Church in 1850, translated from the Bengali.

COVENANT

1. I will regularly worship that Supreme Being, from whom proceeds this Universe, in whom it subsists, and by whom it is made to disappear, in whom is our welfare in this world and in the world to come, who is merciful, formless and only one without a second ; considering his worship to consist in loving him and in doing the works he loves.

2. I will never worship any created object as representing that Supreme Being.

3. Unless incapacitated by illness or any other calamity, I will daily compose my soul, in love and trust, in that Supreme Being.

4. I will strive for the performance of good deeds.

5. I will strive to keep away from things that are evil.

6. If through thoughtlessness I am ever led to commit any thing that is evil, I will truly repent for it, and desist from such a course.

7. I will contribute something every year for the furtherance of the work of the Brahmo Samaj.



Appendix C

The **Gayatri**, considered to be the holiest verse of the Vedas, has been thus paraphrased by Sir William Jones:—"Let us adore the supremacy of that Divine Sun, the Godhead, who illuminates all, who recreates all, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, whom we invoke to direct our understanding aright in our progress towards his holy seat."

The word *savitri* in the original Sanskrit may be interpreted in two ways, first as the sun, secondly as the "originator or creator." Raja Ram Mohun Roy and Maharshi Devendra Nath used that word in the second sense. Interpreted in their way the whole formula may be thus rendered :—"We meditate on the worshipable power and glory of Him who has created the earth, the nether world and the heavens (i.e. the universe), and who directs our understanding."

The original Sanskrit is in the shape of a Vedic mantra and forms a formula for daily devotion of all Brahmins in the land.

Appendix D

The following is a translation of the *Brahmadharma Bija* or "seed-principles of Brahmoism," as framed by Maharshi Devendra Nath in 1850—

1. The Supreme Being alone was in the beginning ; nothing else existed, he created all this universe.

2. He is eternal, infinite, all-wise, all-merciful, independent, formless, one without a second, all pervading, ruling over all, all-containing, all-knowing, all-powerful, the permanent, the perfect, the one beyond any comparison.

3. In His worship alone lies our welfare in this world and in the world to come.

4. To love him and to do the works he loves is his worship.

Appendix E

The following is the Address presented by the secessionists to Devendra Nath Tagore in 1867. It is translated from the original Bengali by Rev. Bhai P. C. Mozoomdar.

To the Venerable Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, Pradhan Acharya of the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj.

Father,

When the patriotic, virtuous, great-souled Raja Ram Mohun Roy established a public place for the holy worship of God in Bengal, the true welfare of the country began. Roused from the sleep of ignorance for ages, Bengal received a new life, and, freed from superstitions, began to walk independently in the path of progress. But that great man being within a short time removed from this world, the light of

Divine worship kindled by him came very nearly to be extinct. At this crisis God raised you, and placed in your hands the charge of the spiritual advancement of the country. The unselfish and untiring zeal with which you have borne this responsibility for the last thirty years, and the endless good you have done, binds us to you in the debt of everlasting gratitude. To revive the declining worship of God according to Vedantic principles, as practised before, you founded the Society known as the Tatwabodhini Sava in Shakabda 1761 (1839 A. D.) where many educated young men forsook their prejudices through religious discussions, and were able to purify their hearts by the worship of God. This Society made rapid progress, and within a short time was filled by a numerous membership. In order that the results of your religious investigations might spread still more widely you founded in Shaka 1765 (1843) the celebrated *Tatwabodhini Patrika*. This journal has truly reformed and adorned the Bengali language, and disseminated the truths of spiritual and secular learning in various places of Bengal and the North-Western Provinces. Thus the Tatwabodhini Sava, and the Brahmo Samaj founded by Raja Ram Mohun Roy, helping each other, contributed to the increase of the worshippers of God. In order to unite them in the bonds of a common faith in due time, you introduced the form of initiation in Brahmo Dharma in 1843. By this means you established the worshippers on the ground of formal belief, and

organised them into a sect of Vedantic Theism. Thus the Brahmo Samaj, developed into its full shape, began to grow, and branch Samajes were founded in different places. But in the advancement of true religion, errors cannot last for a long time. Therefore, the dangerous doctrine of the infallibility of the Vedas that underlay these developments, as soon as it was exposed in the light of knowledge, you tried to discard in obedience to conscience, by the commandment of God, and for the good of the Brahmo brotherhood. By churning the ocean of the Hindu *Shastras* you had obtained the nectar of truth, but when afterwards you found poison in that nectar, you set yourself to distinguish the two, and at last published under the name of *Brahma Dharma* a compilation of the truths of the Hindu scriptures in 1850. In consequence the form of initiation in the Brahmo Samaj was also modified. By deep contemplation you elaborated a number of fundamental and indisputable principles of Theism, and upon these you established the Brahmo community. Thus organising the Brahmo Samaj, for a few years you retired to the Himalayan Mountains. Stopping there for two years, your mind and heart were elevated by contemplation, prayer, study, and you returned to Calcutta to devote yourself with redoubled zeal to the progress of the Samaj which you had reformed before. You established the Brahmo School where week after week you dispensed the pure saving knowledge of Theism to convert unto God the hearts of young men, and your precepts

collected in the form of a book still help hundreds to understand the faith and doctrines of the Brahmo Samaj. But even then the true nobleness of your soul was not discovered. When as Pradhan Acharya of the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj you began to discourse from the holy pulpit on the glorious truths of Brahmo Dharma, then indeed your deep and lofty sentiments became fully known to the world, and specially drew the hearts of men towards God. How often amidst the sins and sorrows of the world we were refreshed by the sweet streams of wisdom that flowed from your heart ; how often in the Brahmo Samaj your rousing precepts have revived our dull dead spirits, and in the realms of the spirit, you discovered for us, we were cheered by the beauty, and profoundness of truth, for the time forgetting the world. These heavenly and matchless *bhakhya*ns (sermons) have now been published in book-form. The benefit we derived from hearing them, we believe others also will derive who read them, and that this invaluable book will be duly honoured in different lands. Thus you have generally served the Brahmo community after the ideals of your own heart, but you have specially benefited a few among us whom you have treated as affectionately as your own children. These have felt the deep nobleness of your character, and elevated by your precept, example, and holy companionship, reverence you as their father, and regard you as their true friend and help in the path of spiritual progress. They will for all time be bound

to you by the debt of gratitude. That the religion of the Brahmo Samaj is the religion of love, and that it is above mere abstract rationalism and empty reform, we have learnt from you, and by your influence and teaching perceived the spiritual holiness and joy of Brahmoism.

Benefited extremely in these various ways, we present you to-day this address as the tribute of the reverence and gratitude of our hearts. It is not our object to speak vain words of praise. Only stimulated by the sense of duty and heartfelt thankfulness we venture to take this step. Do us the great favour to accept this unworthy testimony. May the great God dispense unalloyed joy to your heart, may all your holy intentions be fulfilled, and may every prosperity attend you in this life, as well as in the next.

Keshub Chunder Sen and others.

Calcutta, Nov. 1866.

Appendix F

The following is the letter of Mr. A. M. Bose, addressed to Keshub Chunder Sen, and published in the *Somalochak* of 6th March, 1878.

My dear Keshub Babu,—I feel impelled to write a few lines to tell you how pained I have been feeling at heart, these last few days, at the sad prospect around

us. Today, when the wedding of your eldest child is so nigh at hand, ought to have been a day of rejoicing to our whole community, and to those in particular who have had the privilege for years of enjoying your personal intimacy and endearing friendship. And yet there seem to be clouds in the horizon, sadness in the air. My heart feels weighed down when I think of all the disquieting things around us, and my only hope and fervent prayer is, that our father in Heaven will order all things for the best; that He will in His good time cause all these clouds to be dispersed, and carry us through this fiery ordeal in charity and peace, in purity and strength. When such are my feelings, I can easily imagine what must be yours, when in the midst of the festivities suited to the occasion, there must necessarily occur to your mind thoughts of a jarring and widely dissimilar kind. Though constrained to look at the marriage from a point of view very different from yours, and constrained also to think that so far as the light within me enables me to judge, you are departing from the lines laid down by yourself to the injury of many weaker brethren, I hope you will permit me to convey to you my sincere sympathy with you in the present trial, and an assurance of my personal regard. There is no doubt a collision of principles and views involved in this marriage, an honest difference of opinion, though a difference of great importance, and there can be no harm, but only good, in this being honourably fought out, if so it need be, between those who hold conflicting

views. Such an opposition is, as was remarked in the last *Sunday Mirror*, an honour to the person opposed, and it is also a welcome evidence of the fact that there is life and vitality in the Church. Truth will be brought out and established all the more clearly in the end. But I trust that the character of this fight, viz., that it is in the assertion of a principle, will not be mistaken or forgot ; and that it will, under the guidance of a loving Father, lead to no change in our individual feelings. Many hard things, I find, are being said, and many mistaken interpretations being put ; and I know how difficult it may be at times to keep this lofty ideal in view. But I earnestly pray to God to grant us all strength to enable us to seek and follow the right, without losing our brotherly charity or kindly feelings.

May I make one request to you ? I think you owe it no less to yourself, than to the general Brahmo public, that you should fully and frankly explain your position and views with reference to this marriage,—your reasons for proceeding with an alliance regarding which so many difficulties have been felt, honestly and strongly felt,—by a large section of our community, and which appears to be a clear and an unmistakable departure, in at least one most important feature, from the principles hitherto recognized by the Progressive Church. I would ask you therefore for such a statement, or if it should be preferred, for the publication of such a statement. If I am right in the view that I take on this point, I think there ought to be no delay whatsoever in the publica-

tion or communication of such a statement ; for every single day's delay is likely, in the present state of things, to be injurious.

Trusting that God will bring good out of this evil, and will lead through the present agitation, to the establishment of His Church on a still surer and firmer basis than before.—

I remain, yours very sincerely,

A. M. BOSE

P. S. 16 Feb.—The letter was written the night before last ; I am sorry I could not send it yesterday. I should be glad to hear from you in reply as soon as may be convenient to you.

Appendix G

The Protest of twenty-three Anusthanic Brahmos of Calcutta.

Respected Sir,—The news that a marriage has been arranged soon to take place between your eldest daughter and the Maharaja of Kuch Behar has filled us with deep sorrow. In ordinary cases the marriage of their children is a matter for the consideration of parents ; and it would be unbecoming and an intrusion into what does not concern them for others to say anything on the subject. But you are well aware that

the well-being or the contrary of our whole Church depends to no inconsiderable extent upon your individual actions. It seems to us, therefore, that we should be failing in our duty if we remained silent on this critical occasion. It is with exceedingly sad and sorrowful hearts that we beg to communicate to you some of our thoughts on this subject, and we earnestly hope that you will take them into your serious consideration before you take any steps in the matter. To us this marriage is objectionable on many grounds.

First.—We look upon early marriage as a sin. In truth, marriage should be deferred until the girl attains her proper development—both physical and moral, and she is able to comprehend the solemn responsibilities of marriage. A few years ago, when you yourself took the opinions of many distinguished medical men on this subject, most of them distinctly declared eighteen or nineteen to be the proper marriageable age for girls, but having regard to the general feeling and practice on this subject in the native community, fourteen was fixed as the minimum marriageable age in Act III of 1872. The fixing of this minimum had, at the time, your entire support ; and we had hoped that in your own case you would set a good example to the Brahmo Somaj by keeping your daughter unmarried to a still later age than the minimum of fourteen, recognized by the Act. But we now grieve to find that you are about to marry your daughter when she has not even completed her fourteen years.

Secondly.—In accordance with your suggestion, the minimum marriageable age for men had been fixed at eighteen in the Act. Properly speaking, marriage even at that age should be regarded as early marriage; but we are exceedingly astonished and sorry to hear that you are marrying your daughter to the minor Prince of Kuch Behar before he has completed even his sixteenth year. Should it be said that the fixing of any condition now that the husband and wife should live apart for some time after the marriage would remove the objection on the ground of early marriage, it will be sufficient, in answer to this plea, to refer to the reasons adduced by the *Indian Mirror* some years ago in the case of the marriage of the daughter of a member of the Adi Brahmo Somaj, where an exactly similar plea was raised.

Thirdly.—Judging from the high ideal of marriage set forth by yourself in your speeches and public writings, a marriage where the parties are not yet able to understand the responsibilities of married life cannot be regarded as a marriage at all, yet you are about to make over to one child the charge of another child.

Fourthly.—There being some doubts as to whether a marriage solemnized simply with our religious ceremonies would be legal, many amongst us, yourself taking the lead, got a law passed to remove this difficulty; since that time many men and women and many families have come forward and availed themselves of the provisions of the Act, and have been ex-communi-

cated in consequence. But there are already some amongst our community who take exception to certain requirements and conditions prescribed by the Act. Under these circumstances we expected it from you that you would exert yourself to induce them to shake off their prejudices and overcome their objections ; but, instead of this, we greatly fear that your example, whatever may be your motive and reasons in this case, will lead many Brahmos to overlook the Act, and set aside its provisions when tempted by the rank, wealth, and position of the bridegroom.

Fifthly.—For persons marrying under the Act, polygamy is strictly prohibited, whereas, with the family with which you are allying yourself by this marriage, polygamy is an immemorial custom. The present Maharaja has been under the tuition of the English—and God grant that he may not be guilty of such a thing ; but he is still a minor, and his character is not as yet formed. Under these circumstances, it is impossible to predict what the effect of the education he has received will ultimately come to be. This marriage may therefore lead many people to suppose that the influence of the bridegroom's position and wealth has been so great in your mind as to have led you to disregard the consideration of the risk to your daughter's future conjugal happiness which is involved in this alliance. It is needless to remark that even such imputations with reference to your character would be painful to us and injurious to our Church.

Sixthly.—The Prince and his family were never known before by us or by anybody else as Brahmos, or as even taking any interest in the Brahmo movement. On the contrary, the talked of marriage of this very prince in Southern India, only a few months ago, would have been, if settled, solemnized according to pure Hindu rites ; how can he then be described (in the terms of the ordinary ritual of Brahmo marriages) as a “devout Brahmo”? And were it not for the fact that he is marrying your daughter, would he have thought of celebrating his marriage according to Brahmo rites? If not, can it be thought proper to attach much importance to any present profession of Brahmic faith on the part of the minor Maharaja, and look upon this marriage as a Brahmo marriage?

Seventhly.—A religious father—specially a father like yourself—should attach greater importance to the religious and moral interests of a daughter than to considerations of wealth or rank. But this prince is yet a minor, and he is not a Brahmo of ascertained character. Then, as regards his education, he has not as yet passed the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University. These facts, coupled with the consideration that you would not perhaps have even entertained such a proposal of marriage if, the other qualifications being the same, the bridegroom had belonged to an humbler station in life, will naturally lead people to imagine that in the marriage of your daughter you prefer wealth to other qualifications on the part of the bridegroom, or to consider-

ations of your daughter's future religious and moral welfare. Is it not a lamentable thing for our Church, we ask, that any occasion should be given for such remarks?

Finally, we repeat, and we repeat it again and again, simply because we have been deeply pained by the news of this intended marriage, that we regard early marriage as a hateful custom, and we look upon it as a sin for parents to be concerned in such marriages. We have stated also the other objections we entertain against this marriage. In conclusion, we entreat you not to proceed with this match, and thereby avert from our Church great future injury.

(SIGNED)

Shib Chunder Deb.	Radhakanta Banerjee.
Durgamohan Das.	Hara Kumar Chaudhuri.
Ananda Mohan Bose.	Kedarnath Mukerjee.
Nagendra Nath Chatterjee.	Radhicaprosad Maitra.
Siva Nath Bhattacharjya.	Bhuban Mohan Ghosh.
Kali Nath Dutta.	Rajanikanta Neogi.
Kissori Lal Maitreya.	Ganesh Chandra Ghose.
Ducowri Ghosh.	Satyapriya Deb.
*Khetter Mohun Dutta.	Bhagwan Chandra Mukerjee
Dwarka Nath Ganguli.	Prasanna Kumar Chaudhuri.
Guru Charan Mahalanabish.	Rup Chand Mallick.
Jadunath Chakravarti.	

* This gentleman subsequently withdrew his name from the letter of protest.

Appendix H

An Address to the Brahmo Public of India

(Translated from Bengali)

For some months past, there has been very great agitation in this country on the subject of the marriage between the eldest daughter of the Minister of the Brahma Mandir and the Maharaja of Kuch Behar. The opponents of Babu Keshub Chander Sen, acting under ungenerous impulses, have published endless calumnies against his character ; and there are even many amongst his friends who, not being able to comprehend the exact position of affairs, are full of anxiety and embarrassment. If, however, instead of trying to spread calumnious reports, any of the present agitators, in the name of public good and brotherly love, and in a truly dispassionate spirit, had applied to the Minister for the actual facts of the case, we believe he would have satisfied their curiosity. Nevertheless we find at length a number of such applications have been addressed to him. Certain letters have been written to the Minister himself, to the Assistant Secretary of the Brahmo Somaj of India, as well as to some of our Missionary brethren, requesting publication of the actual facts of the case. We, therefore, have thought it our duty to lay such facts before you after due inquiry as we have gathered. This we do with the sanction and under the direction of the

Minister and for the benefit of the public. It is to be hoped that the perusal of this explanation will remove the doubts of many if not all, and conduce to the welfare of the Brahmo Samaj. On the one hand, the delay which has occurred in submitting this statement may, it is true, have caused some uncertainty and harm, but, on the other hand, it is equally clear that when men's minds are in a state of excitement they are seldom in a position to ascertain the truth of any subject, but as gradually the irritation of their feelings subsides, they are better fitted to form a sound and sober judgment.

We are thoroughly assured that it is not the object of the Minister to justify all the circumstances that have transpired in connection with the marriage of his daughter, or completely to vindicate his own conduct in the matter. There are certain things in relation to the marriage which, if they have pained anybody, have pained him much more than others. The marriage has not been entirely in accordance with his own wishes, and he has never made a secret of his dissatisfaction on this point. If any wrong has been committed in the course of the proceedings under review, he is prepared to protest against that wrong as openly and as loudly as any other Brahmo. But to assert that he has been influenced by the love of money to encourage idolatry and early marriage, or with a view to re-enter the fold of Hindu society, is an infamous accusation which we most indignantly repel.

We must in the first place declare that the Minister

consented to take the initiative in this matter under the pure dictates of conscience. We are aware that he was always exceedingly indifferent to the subject of his daughter's marriage, and, important as that subject was, he felt always free from anxiety about it. Not for a singly day did he attempt to find out a suitable match for his child. When by an unforeseen course of events the proposal for the present marriage was presented before him, he took the circumstance as providential, and without hesitation dealt with it as such. Not being a Utilitarian, he did not care to calculate the consequence of his step. Whether this alliance would lead to the political and religious welfare of the Kuch Behar state, whether it would result in good to the people of Bengal, whether a better match was or was not available among the Brahmo community if due search had been made, whether such match, if available, would not be better, on the whole, than the one proposed, were thoughts which never entered into his mind at the time. Is this thing right or is it wrong?—this was the only question he put to himself. His heart said it was right, and circumstances proved that his daughter's future husband was brought before him providentially. Thus without regard of future consequences, with dependence only upon the impulses of his conscience, and with implicit faith in the will of Providence, he put his hand into the affair. He has always believed that his daily meals, and the government of his household are in

the hands of Providence. He thinks that if he had not undertaken to celebrate this marriage, he would have been guilty before his conscience. And if all the men of this world had been arrayed against him in opposition, he still could not have refrained from it. Because he believes that God is greater than man, and the will of God than the will of man.

The negotiations of the late marriage were carried on and settled between the Minister on one side and Government on the other. The Maharaja of Kuch Behar is a minor, and so long as he does not come of age the Government is his lawful guardian. Therefore, in the matter of the Raja's marriage, the entire direction of affairs lay in the hands of the Government authorities. As Babu Keshub Chunder had never so much as even dreamt that he would have to give his daughter in marriage to a Maharaja, he had never made any application, far less any effort for such an alliance. And if the Government had not been concerned and if it had not made special exertions for the marriage, the proposal of this marriage would never have been entertained. Six months ago, the Deputy-Commissioner of Kuch Behar personally came to Calcutta, and having called to see the daughter of Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, expressed himself fully satisfied with her. After a few days he wrote to him to the effect that the Commissioner, Lord Ulick Browne, had warmly approved of the match. Babu Keshub Chunder Sen was requested to say on what points he required a deviation from the ordinary

usages of orthodox Hindu marriage. It was further pointed out in this letter that the proposed marriage was calculated to do a great deal of good to the country, and suggested, therefore, that both parties should, so far as possible, facilitate arrangements for its consummation. In the beginning of October the Minister expressed his views on the proposal in a letter to the authorities, wherein he laid down thirteen conditions, the principal of which are given below :—

(1) The Raja must acknowledge in writing that he is a Brahmo or Theist.

(2) The marriage must be celebrated according to the ritual of the Brahmo Somaj, that is, Hindu rites divested of idolatry, though such local customs might be supplemented as were unidolatrous.

(3) The marriage ought to be celebrated when the bridegroom and the bride attain their full majority. But if it could not be deferred till then, for the present there might be a formal betrothal only, the due consummation of the marriage being put off until the return of the Maharaja from Europe.

(4) All the Theistic conditions as to marriage rites must be strictly observed ; but on other points, where local usages of a simply unreasonable or absurd nature were insisted upon, these might be tolerated.

Later on, however, in the same month, a communication was unexpectedly received from the Deputy Commissioner, stating that the Lieutenant-Governor had discountenanced the match, because of its prema-

tureness, and the Maharaja himself had expressed his unwillingness, for which reasons the negotiations must be put a stop to. The match, therefore, was broken off, and there was no reasonable chance of the proposal being renewed. Three months later, again, another letter came from the same authority, which said that the Lieutenant-Governor had given his consent to the marriage, but that the Maharaja must leave for Europe immediately after the celebration of the wedding. The new proposal came in this shape. The Raja must under any circumstance proceed to Europe. But as it was thought highly undesirable that he should make this distant tour while he remained unmarried, the proposed marriage could not take place later than the 6th March, though it was to be a marriage in name only. With a view that Keshub Babu might not object to this fresh arrangement, it was argued in the letter of the Deputy Commissioner that though he (Babu K. C. Sen) might feel it exceedingly unpleasant to consent to the marriage taking place so early as the 6th of March, on account of his daughter not having completed her 14th year, he ought to consider that this marriage was in no sense to be a marriage in the usual acceptation of the word, but it was to be a betrothal only.

When the proposal was received in its present form, it was the season of the anniversary festival of the Brahmo Somaj; a delay of some days, therefore, necessarily took place before any definite reply could

be given. But after urgent telegrams and repeated consultations, it was decided that the marriage could take place on the 6th March if it were to be viewed by all parties as a betrothal only, and if Government undertook to guarantee that this relation was to be strictly maintained. The authorities consented to this condition, and other matters connected with the marriage proceeded towards settlement. As regards the Rajas's faith it is a fact that in point of character he is a Brahmo, and on enquiry it was ascertained that his faith in the religion of the Brahmo Somaj had been formed a long time ago. He was prepared to give a written statement of this fact. The first condition of the marriage being thus answered, it remained to settle the rites according to which it was to take place. On this subject Babu Kushub Chunder Sen had proposed that a competent Pundit should be deputed from Kuch Behar to Calcutta, and that both parties should decide this important matter in such a way as to prevent all misunderstanding in future. Accordingly, the principal Pundit of the Maharaja was sent to Calcutta by Government, and he after occasional consultations extending over a week with Pundit Gour Gobind Roy Upadhyaya, the *purohit* (priest) of the bride's party, and after long controversies, in a manner settled the rites of marriage which, according to conditions previously laid down, consisted of the Brahmo ritual as well as local customs devoid of idolatry. The rites were divided under the following heads :—(1) On the

day previous to marriage, *Adhibash*, (2) Brahmo Divine Service at the time of marriage, (3) *Bagdan* (4) *Striachar*, (5) *Svastivachana*, (6) *Burana*, (7) *Kshamagrahana*, (8) *Sammati*, consent, (9) *Sampradan*, (10) *Varada-kshina*, (11) *Udvaha Pratijna*, and (12) *Prarthana*. It was settled that these marriage rites should be printed both in the Bengali and Sanskrit languages in elegant type on *tulat* paper, to be read at the time of marriage by the *purohits* (priests) of both parties. The printing of the ritual was entrusted to the manager of the *Indian Mirror* Press. While these arrangements were in progress, the agent of the Government started with the young Raja for Kuch Behar on the 22nd February, taking with him a copy of the said rites in manuscript, to which was attached a supplementary sheet of paper containing the following special conditions :—(1) Neither the bridegroom nor the bride was to take part in any kind of idolatrous ceremony before, during or after the marriage. (2) At the place of marriage no image of any god or goddess, no fire, no ghats &c., should be kept. (3) Only those *mantras* which were to be printed in the marriage ritual could be read, and the utterance of no other *mantras* was to be allowed. (4) No part of the *Mantras* could be omitted or in any manner modified. To ensure still more fully the observance of these rites, it was proposed that the signature of the Deputy-Commissioner or his representative should be affixed to the document containing the order and description of rites.

After the settlement of these conditions, the bride's party began to make preparations to leave for Kuch Behar. There appeared to be no further fear of any difficulty, specially as Keshub Babu had ere this sent a telegram to the authorities informing them that in matters of religion not the least compromise of his principles could in any sense be expected. In reply to this he had been distinctly assured that he need not apprehend any further difficulty, and that Hindu rites minus idolatry were to be observed. Such clear assurances on the part of Government removed all fear and anxiety as to the fundamental conditions of marriage, and it was thought that if any difference of views arose on minor matters, such differences could be easily arranged at Kuch Behar. On Monday, the 25th February, the bride's party was to start by special train from Calcutta. And while they were busy making arrangements for the trip, a message by wire reached them to the effect that the marriage rites had not yet been examined, and must not be printed. On Saturday night another message came, stating that Brahmo ceremonies had been introduced into the ritual and that this could not be allowed. A protest against this message was quickly despatched on Sunday, and attention was drawn to the marriage conditions before submitted. Difficulties also arose at this time on the subject of nautches, and it was suggested to the authorities to postpone the special train by which the Calcutta party was to go. They replied that the train

had been already engaged, times had been appointed and no postponement was now possible. Thus Babu Keshub Chunder Sen was obliged to leave Calcutta on Monday by the 11 o'clock train in great haste, and he reached Kuch Behar with his family and friends on the 27th instant nearly at midnight. Immediately on arrival, information reached them that no preparations for formal reception had been made, and they were expected to enter the town very quietly. Everyone was mortified at this intelligence, and suspected that there must be deep reasons for it. Until Sunday no difficulties arose, and all went on happily. The subject of the ritual was repeatedly introduced for settlement, but no one seemed to pay any attention to the matter. The ceremony of *gatra-haridra* or anointing with turmeric passed off on Sunday. But on Monday a number of highly respectable gentlemen representing the Maharanis, accompanied by the chief Pundit of the Kuch Behar Court, arrived at the residence of the bridal party and brought forward many new proposals. They said that Babu Keshub Chunder was not to be admitted into the *bibaha mandap* or the place of marriage, that no Brahmin priest who had renounced his sacred thread, and no other man who was not a Brahmin could officiate at the ceremony, that no Brahmo Divine service could be allowed on the occasion, that the bridegroom and bride were to make no marriage vows at all, and that both parties were to perform the *homa*. Keshub Babu and his friends were wonder-struck at this. There was

now but one day remaining to the marriage,—how could these new difficulties be got rid of within that short time? After long controversies the Raj Pundit went away disgusted; and though some of the points raised were set at rest by the discussion, there were other matters in which differences became serious. On Tuesday the *Adhibas* was appointed to take place; the bride was to proceed to the palace in the evening with much solemnity and pomp; every arrangement had been made and every one was in expectation for it. But agitation and controversy on the subject of the ritual raged high till three o'clock in the morning. At length the dispute reached its crisis, and fears were entertained that the match might break off. On the very day of the marriage, that is Wednesday, the controversy on the subject of the *homa* was warm and animated. On one side there was the Government; on another side there was the mother of the Maharaja; on another side again there were the Brahmin priests; and lastly there were Babu Keshub Chunder Sen and his friends. Each side did its best to maintain its own ground. Gradually however the wrangling ceased. The agitation developed itself into the formidable question whether the marriage was or was not to take place. The Maharaja was dependent on Government, which therefore could make any ruling it chose in his case, and outsiders might or might not have any right of interference in the subject: but how could the representatives of the bride lend the least countenance to

idolatry ? It was determined, therefore, that according to previous conditions the bridal party was to keep no connection with any idolatrous observances, and that unless this concession was made the match must be broken off. The concession was at last made at 11 o'clock in the night, and every one felt somewhat reassured. On proceeding, however, to the scene of marriage, it was observed that within a small enclosure called the *mandapa* there were a number of plantain trees and ghats nine or ten in number, and besides some object measuring about half a yard in height was wrapped in a piece of red cloth. Some amongst us felt a suspicion that perhaps certain Hindu deities such as Hara, Gouri, &c., were placed there for the purpose of worship. The Deputy Commissioner being immediately appealed to denied this fact, and after due enquiry amongst the Pundits, distinctly said that among the objects alluded to, there was no idol or object of worship, no Hindu deity had been placed there. From what he and the Chief Pundit said it was evident that within the *mandap* there was no idolatry, but that according to local and ancient usages, certain objects were arranged to lend an auspicious appearance to the whole scene. The ceremonies then commenced. After *bagdan* (pledging of word), *Striachar* (rites performed by female relatives) and *summati* (mutual consent), the bridegroom presented himself within the marriage *mandapa* and the Minister with the Brahmos present held Divine Service in the midst of the assembly.

[In the previous translation, this clause ran "at the general place of meeting."] After a short time the bride was brought, and Babu Keshub Chunder and his brother, and the priest of the bridegroom and the priest of the bride, Pundit Gour Gobind Roy Upadhyā, entered the marriage *mandapa* and took their seats. All current Hindu *mantras* shorn of the names of idolatrous deities and duly amended were recited, after which the bride retired to the inner apartments. Then according to Brahmo practice, the marriage vows and prayers were read by the married couple, and the Minister gave the prescribed precepts. These observances were held at a separate place in the presence of a number of Brahmos. ("Here only three or four Brahmos were admitted."—*Mirror* of March, 17.)

After perusing the statement given above, you will be able to judge whether or not those who have preferred the charge of encouraging (1) idolatry and (2) early marriage against the Minister have done so erroneously. It ought to be borne in mind that the Government and Keshub Babu, both equally opposed to early marriage, have undertaken to effect this alliance, and that the promises and arrangements of the former, made before as well as after the marriage, amply justify the reliance which the latter has always placed on their word of honour. It has been said that Keshub Babu has violated the limits of age as set down in the marriage law which he was chiefly instrumental in getting passed, and that he has acted contrary to his

previous faith and principles. But a good deal can be said to repel this unfounded charge. In the first place, Kuch Behar is an independent State, where the said Act is not in force. Even if the marriage had been celebrated under the Act in Calcutta, as was proposed at one time, the Maharaja, after his return to his own territories, could have been held under no obligation to respect the provisions of the Act. Under such circumstances, then, Act III of 1872 was useless, unavailing and inapplicable to the present case. It was therefore set aside. If the Maharaja had been subject to the British law there is not the least doubt, but that this marriage would have taken place according to the provisions of the enactment; and if the marriage had taken place under the Act, the limits of age would have been observed by both parties. It may be further urged that if Keshub Babu did not avail himself of the Marriage Act for reasons specified above, why did he not stick to the conditions of age as laid down by himself and insisted upon in his own lectures and precepts. He enforces strict rules when the marriages of other people are concerned; but in the case of his own daughter he relaxes the rules and becomes exceedingly indulgent. Why this inconsistency between his previous conduct and present practice? It ought to be remembered that the Minister has on various occasions solemnized Brahmo marriages in which the ages of the girls ranged between 11 and 13 years. He certainly had objection to such marriages, but he overcame his

scruples on the score that formal precautions had been adopted to prevent the evils of early marriage. In the *Udichya Karma* (ceremonies subsequent to Brahmo marriages) it was clearly laid down that unless the bride arrived at the age of adolescence the ordinary relations of a wife to her husband could not be established in her case, and marriage in such instances meant no more than betrothal. Before the commencement of youth, marriage in its actual sense could not be recognized. It was held by the Brahmos, long before the Marriage Act was passed, that the real marriage of a girl before the commencement of youth, in the sense of becoming a wife, is objectionable. When the Act was passed by the legislature, the principle of marriageable age above alluded to, current in the Brahmo Samaj, was formulated into law. It was attempted to ascertain the exact age at which the constitution of girls in this country develops into the physical peculiarities of womanhood, with a view to set down that age as the minimum marriageable age for girls. Dr. Charles gave it as his opinion that the youth of Hindu girls commences at 14. This principle was recognized in the Act. Indeed the real spirit of the law is that the commencement of adolescence is the right age of marriage for girls. In the present marriage *this* condition has been fulfilled. Consequently Keshub Babu cannot be charged with having acted contrary to his principles in the case of his daughter. Secondly, the charge of idolatry is equally unfounded. We can

confidently affirm that on the side of the bride and her father there was not a tittle of idolatrous observance. We have been surprised to hear all this talk about *prayaschitta*. Far from consenting to such a ceremony, there was not even a proposal of it *at any time*. The charge is as false as it is painful. Having just investigated into the truth of the matter, all that we discover is this. A gold mohur was one day brought by the Maharaja's grandmother, who touched with it the back of the bride's palm, laid it on the ground. The girl knew nothing more about it than this. Is this *prayaschitta*? In fact, as we have said above, there was not a particle of idolatry on the side of the bride's party. About the bridegroom it may be said that he himself has no faith in idolatry ; but under the direction and orders of Government, who tried to keep in tact the legality of the marriage, he had to be present at the ceremony of *homa*. If, however, his relations, his priests, or his mother can be found to have indulged in idolatrous practices, surely the Brahmos cannot be held responsible for the same. The more specially as distinct assurances about the exclusion of idolatry had been obtained on our side before any initiative was taken in the matter. The first intimation about the retention of idolatrous observances on the part of the bridegroom was received after every arrangement for the marriage had been completed, and there remained only one day for the marriage. On Friday, the 8th February, after the Raj-Pundit had promised the exclusion of every form of

idolatry from the marriage rites, and Divine service was held in due form at Keshub Babu's house, the Maharaja was allowed to pay his first formal visit to his future wife. Two days later, that is on the 10th February, (*jurani*) presents were received. On the day next to that, after an imposing Brahmo service, the bond of betrothal was written and signed on both sides. In this document Keshub Babu declares distinctly that "this marriage is to be celebrated in the holy presence of the God of Truth." On the 19th instant all the most distinguished men of Calcutta society were invited at Keshub Babu's house, and the Maharaja was introduced to them. Besides all this, the youthful couple often met with one another, in the presence of their gaurdians and elders, in the midst of a Brahmo family, and felt in their hearts the beginning of mutual affection and love. If such attachment be the basis of all true marriage, then it must be admitted that before the bridegroom and bride had left Calcutta, the preliminary stages of Brahmo matrimony had already set in, and that they had in spirit actually entered into the relationship of a Brahmo family. After the progress of arrangements so far, to introduce any new proposal with a view to retain idolatry was, to say the least, quite inconsistent. But we must here observe that we do not venture to construe such unreasonable proposals into misconduct or malice on the part of Government officials. If in trying to discharge their duty they have in any way acted in opposition to our wishes, we have no complaint to make. The worthy

Deputy-Commissioner in the midst of many difficulties tried to be true to his word to the end, and when we felt that we were in real danger, he acted towards us faithfully and as a friend. For all this we have to offer him our sincere gratitude.

In conclusion, our humble request to the Brahmo Public is, that they should in the spirit of kindness and calmness read our statement from beginning to end. When all this dispute and bitterness will have ended, they will find that their Minister has been at all times opposed to the sins of idolatry and early marriage, and whatever his enemies may choose to say, his life has been ever devoted to the unselfish preaching and practice of truth. Let the whole world know that in this grand alliance he did not seek a farthing's worth of pecuniary advantage, nor made a moment's effort to seek re-admission into that Hindu Society which has cast him out. Let all the world know that in celebrating this inter-marriage with Sankocha caste, he has more than ever incurred the penalty and odium of excommunication. According to the will and commandment of his God he has, indeed, given his daughter in marriage to a royal house ; but so far as he himself is concerned, he remains free as ever from the love of gain and the stain of worldliness.

Protap Chunder Mozoomdar,
Assistant Secretary, Brahmo Samaj of India.

Gour Gobind Roy,
Secretary, Brahmo Missionary Conference.

Appendix I

The Statement

(Translated from Bengali)

We owe to the general Brahmo Public a statement of the reasons that have led us to form a separate and independent organization. We beg to inform them by this declaration that up to this time there is no regularly constituted body in the Brahmo Samaj to represent the views of the general Brahmo Community, and as a result of this sad want, the Church is a prey to manifold and serious evils. It seems never to have formed a part of the aim and object of the Adi-Brahmo Samaj to organize and represent the general Brahmo Church ; whilst the constitution of the Somaj founded more than 12 years ago under the name of Brahmo Samaj of India is not at all favourable to the attainment of that object. It does not appear that during this pretty long period the Secretary has ever acted under the instructions of, or in consultation with, an executive committee ; nor does it seem that any code of rules has ever been framed for the regulation and management of the society, even so much so, that the very question who are its members and who are not, has often been quite a puzzle on occasions of reference. During this long period, every important work connected with the society, such as the collection and disbursement of funds—the appointment or removal of missionaries,

etc., has been done exclusively at the option and by the authority of the Secretary. What could be a stronger illustration of this arbitrary way of proceeding than the fact that no trust-deed has yet been drawn up of the public building erected so long as nine years ago, by public subscription, as the house of worship of the Brahmo Samaj of India, and this in spite of repeated efforts made by members of the Samaj in private, as well as in public meetings, to have a trust-deed drawn up and trustees appointed? But all these efforts to have the Brahmo Samaj property removed from uncontrolled individual authority and placed under the legal possession of the general Brahmo community have hitherto failed, owing to the aversion or indifference of the office-bearers.

Whilst there was this unconstitutional and arbitrary way of proceeding on the one hand, many erroneous and superstitious doctrines were also being silently introduced into the Church on the other. For fear of causing a division, we had so long passed over those breaches of constitutional conduct and the preaching of those corrupt doctrines. We have often seen the views and opinions of a few individuals given out and accepted as the opinions of the whole Church—we have often heard many un-Brahmic doctrines preached in the name of the Brahmo Samaj of India, and as a consequence of the acceptance of these erroneous doctrines, we have also seen several members prostrating themselves at the feet of an individual, and many others leaving the

Samaj in disgust and horror at such proceedings. We have often felt the whole Church, and ourselves with it, lowered in the estimation of the public on account of the foolish conduct of some individual members. But yet we have long, and in patience, suffered all this, in our anxiety to avoid an open rupture. But now, unfortunately, there have risen special causes to make independent action necessary on our part to preserve the purity and conserve the best interests of our Church.

First:—The present Secretary of the Brahmo Samaj of India, by marrying his daughter who is aged only thirteen and [a] half, to a boy who is fifteen and [a] half, by allowing certain idolatrous rites to be observed in connection with that marriage, and also by allowing the essential elements of a real Brahmo marriage to be subordinated to, and made secondary to those idolatrous rites, has made himself open to the serious charge of having countenanced early-marriage and idolatry, and has thereby violated two principal doctrines of the Somaj.

Secondly:—Before proceeding to Kuch Behar, many members of the Brahmo Samaj of India entreated him to give up the intended alliance, but he turned a deaf ear to all their representations. Many waited on him as friends, but he denied them any access to the real facts. Many wrote humble and earnest letters, but he did not even condescend to reply to them. For instance, to all the queries personally put to him by Babu Bijay Krishna Goswami, the well-known missionary of the Brahmo Samaj of India, and member of the Missionary

Conference, he replied by maintaining strict silence ; and in answer to the letter which Babu Bijay Krishna wrote after the marriage was announced as settled—he was rudely given to understand that, after that, he forfeited his claims to the discipleship of *bhakti*. On the first announcement of the intended match, four letters were sent to Babu K. C. Sen from Calcutta, earnestly entreating him not to proceed with the match. The first was signed by 23 *anusthanic* Brahmos of Calcutta (Brahmos by practice) ; the second by about 30 Brahmo students of the city ; the third (was) signed by about 20 Brahmica ladies, and the fourth by Babu Haragopal Sircar and three other known members of the Brahmo community. There was a separate letter signed by almost all the *anusthanic* Brahmos of Dacca. Besides these, letters from not less than 50 Mofussil Somajes were sent in and published, condemning the proposed marriage, in due time. But all these letters, remonstrances and expressions of opinion were ignored, and proved of no avail. Babu Keshub Chunder Sen declared it sinful even to look into the contents of the letter sent by Babu Shib Chunder Deb and others, contemptuously returned the letter of the Brahmo students, pleading want of leisure to go through it ; and the ladies' letter was deemed beneath notice ; and as for the other communications, they were also mostly doomed to the same fate. Thus fully conscious of our strong dislike—our deep dissatisfaction and heartfelt sorrow, he went away to celebrate the match.

Thirdly :—After his return, two letters of requisition, signed by many members of the Brahmo Samaj of India, were sent in, the one urging the necessity of calling a special meeting of the congregation of the Brahmo Mandir, and the other that of the Brahmo Samaj of India. Both these prayers were rejected, and the letters themselves were returned. But just after this, Babus Keshub Chunder Sen and Protap Chunder Mozoomdar called these two meetings in their own names. In the meeting of the Brahmo Mandir, Babu Keshub Chunder Sen was formally deposed from the office of the minister by a large majority, and yet he did not scruple to assert his claims on the pulpit with the aid of the Police; and as for the meeting of the Brahmo Somaj of India, it was on a sudden postponed *sine die*, without any particular reasons being assigned.

Fourthly.—Upon this, the before-mentioned members of the Brahmo Samaj of India sent in another requisition, requesting that a meeting should be called within a week. It is indeed curious that when the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary called the meeting in their own names, three days' notice was deemed quite sufficient, but when the requisitionists were concerned, they thought six months' time, at the least, necessary for convening a meeting, and refused on that ground to accede to their prayers. Not despairing, however, the requisitionists sent in a third letter, insisting upon calling a meeting upon three weeks' notice. This request also was not complied with by the Assistant

Secretary, upon the strange excuse, as we subsequently learnt, that a larger number of members had sent a letter asking the Secretary not to accede to our wishes. The third letter of the requisitionists was sent on the 26th April, and in that letter it was distinctly stated that upon the reception of that letter, should the office-bearers decide to call a meeting, then the notice of the same should appear not later than a week, and should they on the other hand choose to treat it like the preceding two letters—they would be so good as to inform the requisitionists of their purpose in three days. For a fortnight did the requisitionists wait daily expecting a notice or a reply. But nothing like either was forthcoming, till the notice of the Town Hall meeting to found a separate organization had appeared in the papers.

Fifthly.—Nothing perhaps can better illustrate the utterly unconstitutional character and the degradation of the Brahmo Samaj of India, than the fact that notwithstanding that hundreds of Brahmos and Brahmicas and a very large number of Mofussil Samajes had protested against the marriage from the beginning—notwithstanding that a large number of the members in a public meeting had declared their deep sorrow and condemnation, and withdrawn their confidence from the present Secretary—notwithstanding that a vast majority of the worshippers of the Mandir in their congregational meeting publicly deposed him from their pulpit; yet did not the Assistant Secretary scruple to

describe a letter of defence, written by him as an apology for the Secretary, as a document proceeding from the Brahmo Samaj of India, and its decisions as the decisions of that Samaj. This is what he says in the letter written by him in reply to the third letter of the requisitionists.

“You have brought two principal charges against the Secretary. The answers to them have appeared in full from the Brahmo Samaj of India in my name. In that letter I have expressed my regret on his behalf for everything that occurred without his knowledge or sanction; consequently when the matter has been formally decided in the name of the Brahmo Samaj of India, I have nothing more to add.”

We are then to accept the apology put forth by a single individual as a formal decision arrived at by the Brahmo Samaj of India. Could there have been a proceeding more unconstitutional, more unreasonable and more illogical than this?

We feel reluctant to notice in detail the unfair and unworthy treatment that the office-bearers and their organs have accorded to those who felt themselves unable to approve of this marriage, and felt it to be their duty to stand up in vindication of what they conceived to be the true principles and the recognized teachings of their Church. They have not hesitated to invent stories against them with a view to lower them in public estimation; they have not scrupled to impeach their personal characters in their papers, and yet have

denied them the right of self-defence by shutting their columns against them ; nor have they shrunk from ascribing the foulest motives to them for their conduct. These are not matters for utterance before this assembly. Our wonder and regret is that those who have devoted many years of their life to preaching the words of truth, men who have often taught lessons of charity, forbearance, and meekness, and who have been looked upon as patterns of Brahmic life, could yet be guilty of conduct like this.

For the reasons mentioned above, we are strongly convinced that as long as the present office-bearers are in office there is no hope of the welfare of the Brahmo Samaj of India, no cessation of the apprehension of her future peril. We could have called a meeting of the Brahmo Samaj of India in the name of some of us, and could have deposed the present Secretary and the Assistant Secretary, but the quarrel would not cease there. They are not the persons to give up power easily. Worsted by constitutional means, they do not scruple, as experience has shown, to ignore such decisions, and still retain their office. Under such circumstances, we deem it the better course to work separately and independently for our spiritual advancement and the good of our Church, rather than involve ourselves into ceaseless quarrel about the name of an institution, or allow the Brahmo Samaj to continue to be a scene of agitation and perpetual discord. Any course that promises better results and greater good to our Church is the one we should adopt.

The foregoing reasons have thus influenced us in forming a separate and independent organization. We need not enter in this place into a detailed description of our doctrines and principles, but we may shortly state that we believe that faith in a Supreme Being and in Existence after Death is natural to man ;—that we regard the relation between God and men to be direct and immediate ;—that we do not believe in the infallibility of any man or any scripture ; whatever book contains truths calculated to ennoble the soul or elevate the character is a Brahmo's scripture, and whoever teaches such truths is his teacher and guide. We regard the forfold culture of man's intellect, conscience, affections, and devotion as equally important and equally necessary for his salvation. We consider love of God and doing the will of God as equally imperative in the routine of a Brahmo's life. We regard the culture of faith at the sacrifice of reason, or the culture of reason at the sacrifice of faith as equally defective, and as fruitful sources of evil in the religious world. We regard the worship of the one True God as the highest of a Brahmo's duties and as the best of means to improve the soul—and the neglect of it as a way to spiritual death. We look upon the enjoyment of uncontrolled authority by a single individual in any religious community as a calamity, and far from looking upon freedom of thought as reprehensible, we consider it to be desirable, and regard it as a safe-guard against corruption and degeneracy. We regard the belief in an

individual being a way to salvation, or a link between God and Man, as a belief unworthy of a Theist, and those who hold such belief as unworthy of the Brahmo name. We consider it to be blasphemy and an insult to the Majesty of Heaven to claim Divine inspiration for any act opposed to the dictates of reason, truth, and morality. From this day we intend devoting ourselves to the propagation of Brahmoism and to the furtherance of the interests of our Church, apart from some of those with whom we have so long acted, but relying for aid and support on Him in whose hands are the destinies of man—who supports every noble purpose, and has all along invisibly regulated the course of our Church—who, in His inscrutable ways, has given strength when our Church languished from very feebleness, has vouchsafed life when her very vitality seemed ebbing away, and who has led her out from the darkness and superstition that eclipsed her face. May He enable us to discharge this sacred mission—may He once more fill all the members of our Church with new life and resuscitated energy—may He cause the day of hope to dawn upon the darkness of despair—may He lead us out of the regions of discord and disunion into those of peace and tranquillity—may He bless our cause and lead the millions of our countrymen into truth and salvation.

Appendix J

From Babu Protap Chnnder Mozoomdar, Assistant
Secy., Brahmo Samaj of India,
To Babu Shib Chunder Deb.

Dated Calcutta, 14th May, 1878.

Sir,

My attention has been drawn to an advertisement in the papers convening a meeting at the Town Hall to organize the Brahmo Samaj on a reformed and constitutional basis.

As the subject of the proposed organization is one of great importance to the Brahmo community and affects the position and prospects of the Brahmo Samaj of India, I beg you will allow me to make the following observations for the consideration of the meeting to be held to-morrow.

It is my duty, on behalf of the Brahmo Samaj of India, to assert most solemnly that this Church is not capable of schismatic division, and that it cannot, therefore, look upon the present disagreement in the Brahmo community as a schism. Constituted as the Brahmo Samaj of India is, its integrity is indivisible, its unity inviolable. Its religion is catholic Theism, which means unsectarian and absolute religion. Its constitution is such that all who have faith in only the fundamental doctrines of religion are eligible as members. So long as there is identity of faith in essential matters no division is tolerated. The Brahmo Samaj of India

is an all inclusive church, which excludes none because of immaterial differences of opinion. Even the "conservative" section of the Brahmo community belonging to the Calcutta Samaj is included in its wider organization. It comprises in its comprehensive membership the widest diversities of opinion and belief, extreme conservations (conservatism) and extreme radicalism, the Hindu monotheist and the English Theist. Should any body of its members on any plea, however plausible, attempt to secede and form a sect, they will nevertheless be regarded by the parent Samaj as still forming a part of the body corporate, and their differences will be tolerated without reservation and their independence fully respected. Such being the constitution of the Brahmo Samaj of India, we cannot for one moment regard the present division in our Church as a doctrinal schism. Nor will you, I believe, contend that it is so. That there is a serious difference of opinion among us in connection with the recent marriage I fully admit. Nor would I deny that among the more excited classes in either of the two parties it has grown into positive antagonism almost as bitter, as violent and as inveterate as sectarianism. Yet the division is by no means of a sectarian character. Both parties uphold the essential principles of Brahmoism ; there is no doctrinal dispute. Even in regard to the questions of idolatry, caste and early marriage, which have been the subject of the present controversy, there is an essential identity of conviction and faith, as both parties are equally averse

to these evils. Where then is the ground for a schismatic rupture ? Nowhere.

A schism, in the true sense of the word, in the sense of sectarian exclusiveness, in the sense of doctrinal disunion, is a moral impossibility in the present case.

If, then, the idea of organizing a new Brahmo sect with a distinctive and hostile creed is altogether out of place in the present controversy, and utterly incompatible with the established principles of our sacred and catholic Church, the question remains to be decided, whether in the matter of church government there is any room or necessity for a sectarian movement. It will not be denied that the Brahmo Samaj of India has always been governed by constitutional means, and not by arbitrary authority. Its office-bearers are selected [elected] and are subject to re-election or removal at the end of each year. There are regular annual meetings for the election of office-bearers, the revision of rules and bye laws, if necessary, and the consideration of all matters affecting the welfare of the community. However great the moral influence exercised by the present Secretary, he has no constitutional power or authority beyond what is vested in him by the community, and he cannot hold office longer than is their wish. If the majority of the members desire to appoint some other person in his place, they are quite at liberty to do so. Nor does he, as the public are well aware, seem averse to such a course, he having already announced his intention to that effect. The affairs of

the Brahma Mandir are managed by persons appointed by the Congregational Society, duly established some time ago at the instance of the leading gentlemen of the "protest" party. In consequence of the present agitation the Minister withdrew from the *Vedi*, but resumed work lately at the request of the majority of the congregation. The charge of arbitrary and single-handed proceedings often preferred against the present Secretary of the Samaj has been as often practically refuted, and there is evidence enough to prove that he was never slow to make reasonable concessions in obedience to the voice of the community. In reserving seats for ladies outside the screen, in organizing the Congregational Society, above alluded to, with a view to control the affairs of the Mandir, and lastly in helping the establishment of the Representative Assembly for the better control of the affairs of the entire Brahmo community, in making these several concessions to the leader of the protest party, who in each case got up a strong agitation with a view to protest against and curtail his authority, he was doubtless guided by a conciliatory spirit. If the gentlemen who readily obtained power whenever they demanded it failed to use it, it was their fault, not his. In fact there has never been a lack of constitutionalism in the Brahmo Samaj of India, but certainly a sad want of active interest on the part of the malcontent section in the affairs of the Church. Their repeated absence at meetings and indifference to existing management often lead them to

suspect unconstitutional conduct which they cannot prove. In the present case the whole controversy hinges on the question of the propriety or otherwise of convening a public meeting for the purposes proposed by you in your letter dated the 8th [9th] ultimo. You will admit that we have no objection to the meeting being called, and have never raised any objection. The Secretary and the Assistant Secretary are bound to convene public meetings, whenever they are requested to do so by an important section of the community, for important public purposes. They have no option in the matter. But in every association such office-bearers are vested with some degree of discretionary power in fixing the time of such meetings. I believe we were justified in not acceding to your request to call an early meeting after the unpleasant and unwarrantable scenes which occurred in the Mandir on two occasions, and which actually necessitated the interposition of the Police. It was chiefly in consequence of the present extremely excited state of the public mind that we had to adjourn a meeting already announced and delay to convene the meeting you proposed. I have already assured you, and I again repeat, the meeting you and your friends wish me to convene, shall be convened as soon as the present excitement subsides, six months hence or earlier, [when] the chances of disorderly behaviour are reduced, and, the public are in a position to judge calmly and dispassionately. The whole controversy is thus narrowed to a mere question of time—

an immaterial difference of opinion as to whether the proposed meeting should be held three weeks hence or six months hence. Upon so slender a plea would the protest party be justified in attempting a hostile organization? I beg they will seriously consider this question, and do all in their power to prevent a rupture which would be unpleasant to both parties. All the reforms you wish to carry out, all the remedies you seek are within your reach in the present constitution of the Brahmo Samaj of India. This Samaj in its catholic capacity gives each of the numerous parties that have taken shelter in it free scope for its operations, and has never hindered any reform movement. Any reasonable proposals that may be adopted at the meeting to-morrow with a view to the amendment of the existing organization of the Samaj without breaking its integrity, or the more effective furtherance of the welfare of our community, will receive, I can assure you, full and fair sympathy and consideration at our hands. It is not meant to put any obstacles in the way of your giving effect to your proposals, so far as condemning particular individuals and actions is concerned. It is not meant to obstruct any extended schemes of devotional development and missionary operation that you may contemplate. It is not meant to check your independence, and to interfere with any honest and honourable difference of opinion that you may happen to entertain. Fully, fairly, and like men do your duty to your Church. But I beg you and your

co-adjutors to merge all personal* questions in public interests, and in the progress of Theism, and unite with us in preserving the unity and purity of our common and beloved home, our Church, the house of our God.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,
PROTAP CHUNDER MOZOOMDAR,
Assistant Secretary.

Appendix K

From

Babu Shib Chunder Deb.

To

Babu Protap Chunder Mozoomdar,

Assistant Secretary, Brahmo Samaj of India.

Dated Connagore, the 18th May, 1878.

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated 14th May instant, and in reply thereto I hope you will allow me to make the following observations, and beg you will give as much publicity to these lines as you have given to your letter to me.

I am sorry I do not at all see why the Brahmo Samaj is not at all "capable of schismatic division," constituted as it at present is. I must confess that when I entered the Brahmo Samaj of India, I thought with you and never for one moment dreamt there would be any occasion for another organization. But as years

rolled by and yet no attempt at having a constitution was made, but on the other hand every attempt to place the Samaj on a constitutional basis was shifted and set at naught, my *worst* fears were aroused, and the persistency with which you baffled all endeavours at a constitution has now landed us at this sad pass.

You say "*constituted*" as the Brahmo Samaj of India is, its integrity is indivisible, its unity inviolable." I wish it were so. Nothing has grieved me so much as the necessity of organizing another sister organization. I tried my best to avoid a separation. I felt most strongly that *division* meant *weakness*; and in order to avoid this division, I and my colleagues in the Brahmo Samaj Committee tried our best to give the Brahmo Samaj of India a *constitution*, but you would not allow it. I cannot see, excuse me for my ignorance, if so it is, how, constituted as the Samaj is, without a Council of Brahmos to guide it, without consulting the opinions of the majority of the Brahmos in the absence of representatives from the Mofussil Somajes, in the absence of a fixed code of rules and bye-laws to go by, managed as it at present is by two men only, the Brahmo Samaj could possibly be "indivisible" and its "unity inviolable." The only strength of an organization is in the unity in the voice of its members; but here the voice of the members found no place, was not even *consulted*, and far less *respected*.

"Its religion," you say, "is Catholic Theism, which means unsectarian and an absolute religion." I must

admit, *theoretically* speaking, what you say is correct, but *practically* it rends my heart to say, it is not so Catholic Theism, in my humble judgment, cannot sanction idolatry and early marriage. It cannot include that form of *Adesh* which you have appealed to, to support your conduct in the Kuch Behar marriage. In the name of Catholic Theism, questionable doctrines not assented to by a majority of Brahmos, and asceticism, seem to have been promulgated as cardinal principles of the Samaj. Pure and Catholic Theism, in my opinion, is not consistent with direct revelation of the kind of which your Minister on Sunday before last spoke. The Theistic Church cannot admit of an "anointed son." Although you *theoretically* deny that Popery and priest-craft have taken possession of your Church, yet in *practice*, I find both these evils existing. The article in the *Sunday Mirror* some time ago on Roman Catholicism opened my eyes to the direction in which the wind blows. In my opinion (I may be mistaken, but I honestly believe that) during the last four or five years, the ideal of pure Theism has been considerably lowered, and this is chiefly owing to the opinions of certain persons being published as the opinions of the Brahmo Samaj. You yourself may not believe in the infallibility of the particular individual, but I do not think you can deny that there are persons who do so, and this I cannot but attribute to the conduct of those who lead the Brahmo Samaj, by, if not actually countenancing, certainly winking at certain

abject pseudo-religious conduct of their followers. I believe the church has lost its pure catholicity and that sectarianism has entered its precincts. On the other hand, if you mean by catholicity to include un-Brahmic and idolatrous ceremonies and objectionable principles, such as that of God indirectly sanctioning an early marriage with idolatrous rites, then, no doubt, the church is still catholic ; but such catholicity I most heartily and sincerely deplore. I am sorry I cannot agree with you in thinking that there are no doctrinal differences. Since your article in the *Sunday Mirror* maintaining that the Kuch Behar marriage fulfilled the *essential* principles of Brahmo marriage, considerable doubt has arisen in my own mind as to whether we do not differ in the essential principles of Brahmoism.

I cannot dismiss the subject of doctrinal differences without making one observation. You say "even in regard to the questions of idolatry, caste and early marriage in connection with the recent marriage, which have been the subject of the present controversy, there is an *essential identity of conviction and faith, as both parties are equally adverse to those evils.*" Excuse me if I say, I have grave doubts whether you *practically* are "adverse to these evils." I never thought pressure from the authorities could make any difference. As a matter of *principle* you at first proposed that the marriage should be solemnized when the parties arrived at their proper ages. That very attempt is an index to the *principle* which regulates Brahmo Marriage ; but then

you yielded to pressure from the authorities, and having yielded, you tried to establish in the *Sunday Mirror* that you had violated no *principle*, and that as a matter of *principle* the Brahmo Somaj had always "preferred to marry Brahmo girls at as early an age as possible," subject to certain physical changes taking place in the girl. According to the feeble light which is within me, I could not but consider this submission to pressure from authorities, as deliberately sacrificing a *principle*. Then as regards *caste*, no doubt the marriage took place between parties of different castes ; but then did you not indirectly sanction caste distinctions by allowing a Brahmin priest of orthodox Hindu convictions and faith to officiate at the marriage ? In the statement which you published some time ago in the *Sunday Mirror* and *Darma Tattva*, you did not even suggest that you were *compelled* to yield about the priest at Kuch Behar. On the other hand, you wrote for and the priest came to Calcutta, and you consented to the priest presiding at the ceremony from the beginning. I hope you have not forgotten the cause of your seceding from the Calcutta Somaj. The most prominent cause ~~was~~ Babu Debendra Nath Tagore's permitting certain ministers, with their holy threads on, preaching from the *Ved*. I hope you have not forgotten that those ministers, although they wore this symbol of idolatry, were Brahmos in their faith and convictions, whereas the priests who you agreed should preside at this marriage, were orthodox, idolatrous

Hindus by profession as well as by practice. Did you not also indirectly sanction caste prejudices by Keshub Babu agreeing not to give away his daughter in consequence of his visit to England, and submitting to his brother's doing the same? This was done deliberately before leaving for Kuch Behar, and therefore there can be no pretext for saying that you were coerced to do this at Kuch Behar.

How can I, after all these (things), say, "both parties are equally adverse to these evils?" How can I say there are no doctrinal differences, "no ground for a schismatic rupture?" May I beg to ask you here whether at the time that you separated from the Calcutta Somaj, there were really any doctrinal differences existing? Were there any doctrinal differences which separated the Free Church party from General Assembly? As in the one, so in the other, there were differences about the Government of the Church, and this brings me to this other part of your letter, *viz*, the constitution of the Brahmo Samaj of India.

You say, "it will not be denied that the Brahmo Samaj of India has always been governed by constitutional means, and not by arbitrary authority." I have always had the highest regard for your character and the sincerity of your opinions, but I regret here I cannot agree with you. No doubt you honestly believe so, but allow me to say, I honestly believe the contrary. You will readily admit I have seen more of the world than you have, being senior

in age (although junior in ability). I entered the Brahmo Samaj when you were a child, or perhaps not born. My ideas of a constitutional Church Government are somewhat different from yours. The government of a Church consisting of members scattered throughout the country cannot safely vest in one or two persons, and these two persons, in my opinion, cannot act without the assent of all the members. There ought to be a representative Council in which all the provincial Samajes should be represented, and nothing ought to be done without consulting their voice. No rules or bye-laws ought to be passed to which all Brahmos, members of the Samaj, do not agree. No doctrine ought to be promulgated as a doctrine of the Somaj which is not consented to by a majority of Brahmos. Nothing should pass as an act or deed, or opinion of the Samaj until a majority of the members sanction it. I am an old man, and my ideas may be crude, but this is my idea of a constitution. Can you lay your hand on your heart and say you have such a constitution in the Brahmo Samaj of India? Let me point out one or two instances which I think smack more of "arbitrary authority" than of constitutionalism. When Babu Keshub Chunder voted an address to Lord Lawrence on behalf of the Brahmo community, did he consult all Brahmos? If not, should he have done so? Can the Secretary of a constitutional body do so without consulting all the members if there be no committee of management, or if there be such a committee, without

consulting such committee? Another instance of "arbitrary authority" is your letter to me of Bysack 29th, 1800 *shak*. You say "the two chief accusations brought by you against the Secretary have been answered by me in a formal statement on behalf of the Brahmo Samaj of India." And further on, "and therefore when this matter has been once disposed of in the name of the Samaj; I feel I am unable to enter into them again." Are you the Brahmo Samaj of India? Are you the representative, duly appointed, of all the members of the Brahmo Samaj of India? Did you consult all the members of the Brahmo Samaj of India when you published that *formal statement*? What were the accusations and who were the accused? The Secretary was the accused and the Assistant Secretary his judge! The letter to which yours was reply, asked the Secretary to call a meeting of his co-religionists to try him, but you as the Assistant Secretary, sat on judgment upon him, and you ask the public to accept your judgment as the judgment of all those who form the Brahmo Samaj of India, without even asking for the opinions of those members. You had been to England and have travelled over the continent; I ask you, therefore, whether you acted constitutionally in this matter. May I beg to ask you to point out to me the rule or bye-law (for you say there are rules and bye-laws of the Samaj) by which the Secretary had the discretion of not calling meeting when requested by certain members, although certain other members may not wish such

a meeting to be called? May I beg to know at what "regular annual meeting" such a rule or bye-law was passed? My experiences of corporate bodies tell me, when office-bearers are re-elected there is always a proceeding recorded, as well of the fact of such a re-election as of those who were present at such a meeting. Will you be good enough to shew me the proceedings of any one of such meetings? Where is then the *constitution* of which you speak? About 12 or 13 years have elapsed since the foundation of the Brahmo Mandir. Have you taken any steps to appoint Trustees for the building? Was not the building built out of public funds, the lands purchased out of such funds? Then, why was the title-deed created, as I hear but am not yet certain, in the name of Babu K. C. Sen alone? Why have you not since transferred the title to a body or Trustees? Am I to understand that you could not make time during these 12 or 13 years to accomplish this and do your duty to your Church and to those who subscribed to the building fund? Yet you say you have a constitution sufficient for all practical purposes.

You say the Secretary "has no constitutional power or authority beyond what is vested in him by the community." Have the community ever vested in him any power or authority whatsoever? If so, when and how? I for one, though connected with your Church from the beginning, do not know of any power being *constitutionally* vested in him. You also say "the Secretary does not

seem adverse to being removed, and that he had already announced his intention to that effect." Here I am puzzled a little. If the Secretary intended to resign, why did he not do so? Nothing would have been easier than to send in his resignation. Can you say he was requested not to do so by a majority of Brahmos, members of the Brahmo Samaj of India? I had occasion to consult the Mofussil Samajes on this very question in another public capacity, and the impression left on my mind by the replies I received was certainly that a majority of the members would have gladly accepted the resignation. I felt the pulse of the Brahmo community, and if you believe me, I can say, it is against you.

You say, "the Secretary and Assistant Secretary are *bound* to convene public meetings whenever they were requested to do so by *an important section of the community for important public purposes.*" In this particular case, the request to convene a public meeting may not in your opinion have come from "an important section of the community," but can you deny that the meeting was asked for "an important public purpose?" Then, is there any rule laying down that the Secretary is *bound* to call a meeting in certain cases and in other cases he is not? In other societies and organizations, so far as I know, such a rule does not exist. But of course in a constitutional society, there is always a limit set as to how many members' requisition would be necessary to call a meeting. However, as I said,

could there be any doubt as to the "*important public purpose*" for which the Secretary was asked to call a meeting? It was to judge of the advisability of retaining or dismissing the Secretary. What right had the Secretary or his Assistant to determine whether the reasons were sufficient or not? The meeting would have had to decide it, and not those who were charged. Could this have taken place, if there had been anything like a *constitution* in the Samaj? This is the first time I hear of the Secretary or an Assistant Secretary having any option of fixing the time of the meeting when the requisitionists require him to do so forthwith. The office-bearers of a society having a *constitution* are its servants and bound to carry out orders, not to use any discretion whatsoever. But you took advantage of the want of a constitution and *practically* refused to call a meeting. As an office-bearer you had no right, in my humble opinion, to take into consideration the "excited state of the public mind."

If the majority of members present at such meeting determined that that meeting should be postponed, then and then only you would have been justified in putting it off. The whole controversy is not "a mere question of time" as you say, but a question of *principle*. The question is whether you had the power arbitrarily to decline to call a meeting within the time mentioned in the last requisition, or whether you had any right to inquire what the reasons for calling such a meeting were, and to decide a point which it was for the mem-

bers, of a majority of them, to decide. Practically, in my opinion, you hindered all attempts at reformation, say what you like. You called the congregational meeting of Thursday, the 21st March. It was to consider the propriety of retaining Babu K. C. Sen as minister. You wished that Babu K. C. Sen should be the Chairman of that meeting, although he was the accused. Was that constitutional, I ask you? Has such a thing ever been heard of before? This strange conduct on your part gave rise to much of the angry feelings which marked that meeting. You found popular opinion against you and called in the aid of the police, and then threw the whole blame on the protest party. You brought out a loose sheet of paper which you called a list of the members of the congregation, in which only 34 or 35 names were entered as persons competent, according to established custom, to vote, whereas there were 100 persons competent, according to established custom, to vote. If such proceedings were not arbitrary and high-handed, I really do not know what arbitrary and high-handed proceedings mean. And yet you say "you did not mean to put any obstacles in our way." I honestly think (I may be mistaken) that you did your best to put all sorts of obstacles in our way.

However, let all that pass. If you believe me, I say that it was not without doing violence to my feelings that I joined a new organization. It is my firm conviction that if you had not driven us to it, we would not

have thought of organizing another Samaj. Now that we have separated, there need be no other civil dissension. The field of work is very great, and is open to all of us. Both you and ourselves aim at the same thing. We may adopt different means of gaining our object, but that should not interfere with our common work. It would have been the happiest moment of my life if I could die working with you hand in hand ; but it has pleased the Father that we should separate, and work, not unitedly, but separately, for a common object. We all want to reach a common goal. We may arrive at it by different ways. If we have misjudged your motives and actions, may Heaven forgive us. If you have misjudged and misinterpreted our motives and actions, may the same Heaven forgive you. It is clear that our ways lie in different directions, though leading to the same point. May the All-merciful Father bless you and yours.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obediently,

SHIB CHUNDER DEB.

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